This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES
3 3433 07576414 6

v. 2
HCW
Ward, R.

DE VERE;

OR, THE

MAN OF INDEPENDENCE.

BY

THE AUTHOR OF TREMAINE.

R. P. Ward.

My free drift
Halts not particularly, but moves itself
In a wide sea of wax.

Shakspeare.

Power to do good, is the true and lawful end of aspiring: for good *thoughts* (though God accept them), yet, towards men, are little better than good dreams, except they be put in act; and that cannot be without power and place, as the vantage and commanding ground.

Bacon.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

THE PROPERTY OF THE NEW-YORK SOCIETY LIBRARY

PHILADELPHIA:

CAREY, LEA, AND CAREY—CHESNUT STREET.

SOLD IN NEW YORK, BY G. AND C. CARVILL; IN BOSTON, BY HILLIARD, GRAY, AND CO., AND RICHARDSON AND LORD.

1827.

THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY
157650B
R L

MIFFLIN AND PARRY, PRINTERS.

F

DE VERE.

CHAPTER I.

PROVIDENCE.

——Yet again, methinks,
Some unborn sorrow, ripe in fortune's womb,
Is coming toward me; and my inward soul
With nothing trembles.

SHAKSPEARE.

And why should tears flow from one described so innocent? And how could they be excited by festivity, or a fair and harmless display of magnificence?

Strange and unnatural to suppose such inconsistent compunctions in the bosom of a young and noble lady, on the very close of a birthnight in which she had charmed all eyes! But my business is with facts; and as Constance, at present at least, could not be sophisticated by a world she had scarcely seen, I will trust to that simple circumstance, and her own character, for proof that I have recorded nothing unnatural. Who, indeed, not absolutely worn out, or plunged in dissipation for a longer time than its novelty could charm—who that has discovered the powerless realities of the pageantries of life,—but has felt a re-action, a want of assistance, and a remorse, such as has been described?

The disposition in which we left Constance, was not merely transient; nor were the thoughts with which she lay down to rest dissipated, like an evil dream, by the cheerfulness of the morning sun.

At breakfast, it was remarked that she bore the traces of any thing but joy; and many of her younger guests wondered that a beauty, an earl's daughter, and an heiress, *could* exhibit a face of seriousness.

But, in fact, the enjoyment of the day before seemed now at least to have been problematical. What she had seen, had by no means satisfied her; for it had left her with no very high opinion of her species. The fashionable part of her company seemed stiff, jealous, and unimpressive; the rustic, equally jealous, and not the more sincere from having less polish.

Examining her own part in the exhibition, she could not divest herself of the notion, that to be the object and centre of a great circle, one must be, or at least seem to be, a great actress. This did not please; and in the midst of company and magnificence, she found there was a void in her heart, for which, as it was unexpected, so she could not account. It was, therefore, without regret, that she saw her guests rapidly diminishing as the day advanced.

Unreasonable Constance! thus to deal with the gifts of the world, and not to "take the good the gods provide thee!" She wondered at it herself; and upon being rallied by the Marchioness, and questioned (though without raillery) by Lady Eleanor, she confessed all that had passed in her heart the evening before; and in particular the little sufficiency of the apparently gay scene in which they had been engaged, to supply the enjoyment she had expected.

The three ladies had escaped from the Partridge family and from the gentlemen who were occupied with their politics, into the path that led to the bee-garden, when this confession began; and I shall make no apology for presenting it to the reader, as characteristic of all three.

Lady Eleanor said she was not surprised, for she had herself remarked the conversation of those who had approached Lady Constance; "and whether," said Lady Eleanor, "from my retired habits, or that the world is really changed, I found none who came up to the notions I had formed of fit companions for the mind of my niece."

"And yet we must not be too fastidious," said the Marchioness; "the world has many disagreeable things in it, men and women among them, yet, upon *the whole,* it is a good world, and the little defect

that appear in manners and character in mixed society, where all character seems for a time disguised, may soften down, and disappear upon better acquaintance."

"The acting of Mr. Freshville, for instance," said Lady Eleanor; "the folly of Sir Bertie; or, I am sorry to say it, the insolence of my kinswoman, Lady Elizabeth, and her daughters."

"Why, even of these," observed the Marchioness, "we have only seen some faults that certainly float on the surface. Should we look deeper, we might find some counter-balancing good. I cannot, I own, discover much under the solemnity of Mr. Freshville; but Sir Bertie has, at least, great good-nature; and the youthful silliness of your young cousins may not prevent them hereafter from proving good wives and mothers."

"Impossible!" exclaimed Lady Eleanor. "I love your good-nature, Marchioness, but you have been too happy in the world; the Marquess and a prosperous life have spoiled you, and long may you continue to be so spoiled."

Lady Clanellan rather smiled at her earnestness; and as, like most people who have no reason to be out of humour with the world, she was in *good*-humour with it, and had always endeavoured to infuse this spirit into her young pupil, she did not choose this representation to pass without comment; she therefore observed, "You will at least allow, my dear Lady Eleanor, that I have had no reason for misgivings in the midst of prosperity, and that our dear Constance's fears, at the end of her fête, may have been, as they probably were, the mere effect of fatigue."

"It was the effect," said Constance, "of an unsatisfied feeling, for which I could not, and cannot now, give a reason, where all is seemingly so promising of satisfaction."

"As if," said the Marchioness, "there being different lots in life, we should not pursue, or enjoy the high, as well as the low."

"That is all very true and sensible," answered Lady Eleanor; "but the fear is, that the high lot may

make us think too much of ourselves, and too little of the Giver; though that, I am sure, will never be my dear Constance's condition."

"I trust not," said Constance; "and yet the feeling I had, was as if I was not sufficiently humble, and deserved to be lowered. I thought, too, as I looked fearfully at these proud walls, and recollected *who* I was, how much happier I should be if I had a brother."

"In that respect, I scarcely know what to wish for you," said Lady Clanellan; "but leave it safely to Him whom you so properly invoked not to try you beyond your strength. Yet I cannot help owning, that had you a brother, it might save you some trials."

"It might save me from Lord Cleveland," observed Constance, with a sigh; "and on this I could not help brooding. I thought myself too great, and could not help repeating some of those passages which Mortimer is so often repeating.

> 'One heav'd on high, to be hurl'd down below;
> A garish flag,
> To be the aim of ev'ry dangerous shot.'

On the other hand, I thought, and wistfully too, of the passage in your favourite Walton, which we are all so fond of—'I will walk the meadows, by some gliding stream, and there contemplate the lilies that take no care.' I almost wished myself one of these lilies."

"These are all delightful indications," said the Marchioness, "and show a disposition, the farthest in the world from what you dread; and upon the whole," added she, smiling, "I think you may be reconciled to your fate, of being a great heiress; though I allow it is not every heart that can stand prosperity."

"Will it give me one real friend?" asked Constance.

"It neither will, nor ought to *give* you one," replied her aunt; "too happy if it do not forbid your distinguishing friends from flatterers."

"That is what I most feel, and most fear;" answered Constance, with much seriousness.

"And what is to forbid," asked the Marchioness, "that there should be persons in your own station, as estimable and capable of friendship, at the very least, as those below you: and if there are, that they should seek out and love one so worthy to be loved? It is, surely, the saddest, and most unjust of all mistakes, to suppose that the great have no feeling; or that because they may be rich, they cannot be good."

"Yet we are admonished pretty pointedly, in the sacred book," said Lady Eleanor, "about the difficulty of the rich man. However, nobody who knows you, Marchioness, will say this is universal. Yet, let us confess, there are not many Lord Clanellans among the Peers; and I should say fewer still like his wife among the Peeresses."

"I confess no such thing," said the Marchioness; "and could name many an Earl's daughter, the ornament as well as inhabitant of a Castle, like our dear Constance here, who while they are formed to adorn a high station, have all the gentler virtues of a moderate one."

"I am sure I will not question it," replied Lady Eleanor; "you will, however, at least own, that prosperity has a tendency to harden the heart, though your's may have escaped."

"You will render me vain in the very worst way of being so," replied the Marchioness; "vain of humility, for if I have so escaped it has surely been from a sense of my own littleness."

"The very thing," observed Constance, "which I felt so home, when I thought of the masque, and all that was said upon it. I was even almost angry with Mortimer for his undeserved gallantry. There seemed a voice whispering in my ear the folly I had been guilty of in listening to it, and the precariousness of all on which I had been so complimented."

"'Twas a kind voice," said Lady Eleanor.

"I shall not soon forget it," answered Constance.

The conversation was here interrupted by their meeting Dr. Herbert, De Vere, and Lord Cleveland,

who had been to the Dairy-house in quest of the ladies; Lord Cleveland declaring they ought not to submit to be cut off from the only society that made the country bearable. He was about to address Constance, but saw something in her countenance which disclosed deeper subjects than those on which he wished to entertain her.

"Dr. Herbert," said the Marchioness, "I want your assistance against a couple of philosophers,—(no, I mean any thing but philosophers,)—in petticoats, who are raving against the world, for not being able to make us happy; when I say it is a very pretty world, and has *les meilleures* dispositions possible to confer happiness, if we only choose to think so."

"And yet," said Lady Eleanor, "we are only discussing the necessity of guarding against confidence in the continuation of prosperity, and the danger to the heart of supposing the tide will never turn."

"My cloth would necessarily lead me to be with you," said the Doctor, "but I am not so instructed as I might be, and you had better," added he, laughing, "consult the Miss Partridges; for I mistake, if *they* ever think about the tide's turning."

"The Doctor is afraid of committing himself," said Lord Cleveland; "but he is a courtier: now I, who am none—"

Here Herbert and De Vere, and even the Marchioness herself, laughed outright; but the Earl, unabashed, proceeded,—"I who am none, side with Lady Clanellan. As to the tide, we know that there is one in the affairs of men, which leads on to fortune; but

> "Omitted, all the voyage of their life
> Is bound in shallows and in miseries."

This is my creed, and by this be my actions governed."

"A very good creed," observed Herbert, still laughing, "for all sanguine young people, like you and Lady Clanellan."

"Nay," said Cleveland, "I am most serious; nor did you ever know any cautious, meanspirited, shop-

keeping rascal, who calculated tides and seasons before he would move, successful to any extent. I do not mean that he might not have a grovelling sort of success, but he never could soar with eagle flight, unblenched and undazzled by the sun."

"There was one Icarus," said the Doctor, growing serious.

"Nay," cried Lord Cleveland, "I trust you are not going to lecture us against ambition, for fear of melting our pinions."

"And why not," asked the Doctor, "if you are for flying too high? The ambition I preach is reasonable, not ruinous. But it seems, that if a throne were vacant—"

"I should wish to mount if I could," said Cleveland.

Lady Eleanor, willing to recal the subject which was still uppermost with her, observed, "It was not ambition we were talking of so much as the tendency of success to promote a dangerous indifference towards Him who sent it, and the almost certainty that this indifference would be followed with most miserable visitations."

"This is, indeed, a serious subject," said Herbert, "and worthy this appropriate spot, where the towering castle, on the one hand, frowns upon us in all the pride of power; while on the other, this alcove presents us with a view of the gentlest beauty. Never were ambition and content so well contrasted."

The Doctor spoke truly, for the alcove was placed just where the sides of the brook opening, let in a reach of the pebbly stream, which delighted the eye by its placidity. The whole party consentaneously sat down to enjoy it.

"'Tis, at least, a charming place to moralize in," said the Doctor, as he seated himself; "and not the worse for its contrast to the splendour of yesterday."

"Did you then disapprove the splendour of yesterday?" asked Lord Cleveland.

"By no means; provided," added Herbert cheerfully, "no one's head was turned by it."

Lady Clanellan looked at Constance and smiled, and Constance could not help smiling too.

"Shall I tell you a secret?" said Lady Clanellan; "Lady Constance here thinks she is too great, and that a still small voice (I suppose of her guardian sylph,) warns her to beware of the giddiness you have mentioned."

"It would be good for us all," answered Herbert, "if we had such voices always attendant upon us. But what really was your question?"

"We had scarcely agreed upon it," answered Lady Eleanor, "but I would ask, for myself, what it is that creates the sometimes unaccountable feeling of distress and danger, the fearful misgiving which a good mind feels, (for I believe it is chiefly a good mind that feels it,) when our lot is cast so high that every thing seems to prosper. May it, or not, be the immediate interposition of heaven?"

"I see no reason against it," replied the Divine, "nor is the whole scheme of Providence, as the moral governor of the world, other than such imperceptible interposition. I will own to you, too, that a long course of prosperity seems the very state to call for it, and to predict reverses in the nature of punishment if you neglect it. I say, imperceptible, because you must always take care, in regard to interposition, not to fall into the visionary error of supposing that Providence manifests itself to you *perceptibly*. Leave that to the beautiful images of poetry."

"How then are we to know?" asked Lady Clanellan.

"By the effects," answered Herbert. "We pray in the Church for the inspiration of a holy spirit; we pray for it in the closet; the effects are felt in our conduct; and the proofs we have of an ever watchful Providence, together with the certainty of our own failings, support the notion, that if we feel these effects, it arises from the goodness of Heaven, and cannot spring from the weakness of man."

"A beautiful theory," said Lady Clanellan.

"I wish it were as demonstrable as beautiful," observed Lord Cleveland: "but really I could not have expected this would be a subject for ladies who are so entirely at the head of good company. Surely 'it is

lees and settlings of a melancholy blood.' Yet,
ıe *blood* of a Marchioness, still more of the
of Arcadia, should be *melancholy*, moves my
r."
ıtance blushed, and De Vere, feeling for her,
ed with some emphasis, that the subject was too
ıs well as too important, to be ridiculed.
elieve me," returned Cleveland, seeing displea-
Constance's eye, "I am the last man in the
to ridicule such a subject. I wish I could side
ıe Doctor; but though he talks of fearing pros-
as if it were an evil, and of reverses, as if they
ıeant for punishment, the whole course of the
contradicts him. For it is full of instances of
, well followed up, and never failing, except
ıe failure of nerves in those who throw away
;ood fortune by being afraid to pursue it. On
er hand, how uniform are the instances of ill-
certain poor humble devils, who (do what they
ɜem born never to prosper. Wonder not, there-
I am a worshipper of Fortune, and think to
would be to affront her. What says youth to
added the Earl: "what thinks De Vere?"
ıat I have not presumption enough to agree with
answered De Vere.
l this," observed Herbert, "depends upon a
ıe temperament, which, with submission, takes
ust what it does not like to examine. Yet even
ers, who hold it a law to pursue a run of luck,
lay their account with seeing it change. But
)ject, as I understand it from these ladies, lies
per than the view your Lordship has chosen to
it."
ır deeper, indeed," said Lady Eleanor, and the
ɜs of Constance showed she approved of the ob-
on, though she said not a word.
know," observed Cleveland, "what fine theo-
ıy be, and are, spun out of this; but I have al-
hought them the visions of enthusiasts, in oth-
ds, of madmen."
every one then," replied Herbert, with a

searching look, "mad, in your Lordship's opinion, who believes in the government of Heaven?"

Lord Cleveland did not like the question, especially as he saw he was keenly examined by the elder ladies, and that Constance, though her looks were not bent upon him, was silently most observant. De Vere, too, was about to interpose a question, but thinking it would disconcert Cleveland still more, perhaps lower him with Constance, he abstained, from motives for which Lord Cleveland, had he been in his place, would have thought him the greatest blockhead in the world.

Recovering himself a little, the gallant lord answered, "I am not so much my own enemy, in such a time and place, and with such company, as to throw away a precious hour in what would prove at best a dry controversy. Besides, though my antagonist is a philosopher of the court, he is also a divine, and what could I expect from so great a doctor, but to be tossed on the horns of some shocking dilemma. I will, however, just remark, that though there are a thousand amusing stories of interposition by dreams and ghosts, and other fancies, no one of any *monde* believes in them, and as little does history confirm the perceptible interference of which we are speaking."

"Perceptible interference," replied the Divine, "is not, and indeed I have taken pains to premise, cannot be the question. For such interference would be a miracle, and miracles are over. But second causes are very different; and these feelings may all arise out of second causes. How these can be disposed so as to produce the events of the world, and even the operations of our mind, is a point so difficult to ascertain, that careless men give it up; worldly men, who see nothing but second causes, laugh at it; in courts, where one great human creature seems a *first* cause, few are acquainted with it; in crowds no one has leisure to feel it. But, sooner or later, it comes home. In the dead of the night; in the retirement of the closet; in one's garden, or such a place as this, (particularly when alone,) be assured the 'still small voice' we speak of makes itself heard."

Constance was peculiarly pleased, nor liked the

rl for interrupting the Divine by asking him with a king sneer, if he had ever heard this voice?

'To say I have heard it speaking in *language*," swered the President, "or, like Lord Herbert, who, en writing against revelation by miracles, asserts e greatest of miracles in his own person,* to say I re in any manner experienced a *direct* interposition, uld, perhaps, induce your Lordship to rank me ong the gentry you mentioned just now—enthusi- and madmen. But this I can say, (all philoso- r of the court as you have called me,) that there e been moments of abstraction from the court, and ry thing else, but the contemplation of the Al- hty in his providence, in which I have been fear- y impressed with his mysteries, and have been thing but confident of myself."

'And what was the result?" asked Lord Cleve- d.

'Always to do me good, for it always humbled ," replied the Doctor; "and then my fears subsi- , and confidence returned."

he answer pleased Constance.

'To say the best of it," observed Lord Cleveland, is was a mere private feeling, and proves little or hing."

'It proves what we are talking of, as well as it will it of proofs," said the Doctor. "The time as I erved, is over, when visible interposition was the descending mode of directing the world; for, un- pily for us, there is now

> 'No more of talk when God or angel guest
> With man, as with his friend familiar, us'd
> To sit indulgent.'"

That must indeed have been a happy time," said Vere; and to that sentiment his cousin, by her s, evidently responded.

Instead of poetry, give me facts," said Cleveland. hat does history say to it?"

See his most extraordinary account of music sent from Hea- when he asked a sign to direct him in his design of publish- is book, De Veritate.

"Will you believe history if I tell you?" asked the Divine.

"I will not believe Livy's silly stories of voices in the air, any more than my Lord Clarendon, with his sleeping dream about the Duke of Buckingham, or his waking one of Lord Brooke, at Litchfield."

"You wish to touch me home," said the Doctor, "in mentioning the last. But setting aside my partiality for my favourite Cathedral, if you ask me seriously to say what I think, I am not one of those enlightened persons, like your Lordship, who have so settled the matter as not to consider the circumstances of Lord Brooke's death as peculiarly awful."

"I have never gone by the spot where he fell," said De Vere, who had been most attentive to this part of the conversation, "without feeling it so; nor can I laugh at Clarendon for appearing to favour the notion (he does no more), that this death was an absolute and immediate judgment."

"That such a mind as yours," cried Cleveland, "should think so! But I will refer you to a far better confutation than mine of so ridiculous a legend;" and he took a letter from his pocket-book, which he had just received from a man of high fashion, and some research in the olden literature of the country, though of little depth as a real philosopher, which he was even then affecting to be. He was a correspondent of Cleveland's on these subjects, on which they much agreed; but Herbert, who perfectly knew his shallowness, at the same time that he admitted his agreeable wit, observed instantly, on hearing his name, "He will make it ridiculous if he can, for he lives but to ridicule all that is serious. Barring his wit, however, which is delightful, his reasoning is in general as shallow, as his presumption is offensive."

"The cleverest man of the age," replied Cleveland.

"At an epigram if you will," said Herbert; "but at a truth, no conjuror. Let us first see what is Clarendon's story, and then hear the comment. Lord Brooke, perhaps a sincere and, as it should seem, a pious man, had resolved to storm the Close at Litch-

field, which held for Charles. A little doubtful, it would appear, of the lawfulness of his cause (he should have thought of that before he commenced rebel), he knelt down before the assault began, and prayed, if the cause he had engaged in was not just, that he might be cut off. Soon afterwards he was shot. Now what does your cleverest man of the age say to this?"

"Why, he asks," replied Cleveland, "'Does the ruler of the universe inflict sudden destruction, as the *way to set right a conscientious man?*'"*

"And is this all?" said Herbert. "If it is, and it be witty, most unfortunately for the wit, Lord Brooke had not prayed to be set right, but to be "cut off" if wrong. So far, therefore, the wit depends upon a *false statement*, for his real prayer was complied with. But even without this, could there be no other reason for his death, than what concerned Lord Brooke? The notoriety of the prayer, and its issue, made it of the last importance to those who witnessed the facts. To them, opinion *was* set right, as far as such an example could set it right; and hence the argument against interposition, on account of absurdity, falls to absolute nothing."

"Doctor," said Lady Eleanor, "I thank you for having cleared up this matter, against the scoffing of this fine gentleman, who, with all his point and high breeding, never was a favourite of mine."

Lady Clanellan and De Vere joined in these thanks, and Constance looked them.

"My poor friend!" exclaimed Lord Cleveland. "But he is a Whig, and I don't care for him. Nay, you have only kindled me more to hear a little history in support of your theory."

"I have no theory," returned the Doctor: "I only have held that prosperity is an instrument in the hands of the Most High, to try the piety and virtue of those who may be laid most low; that according as it is borne, reverse and punishment follow, and that this is the very simple course of a government by Providence."

* "Royal and Noble Authors."—Art. Brooke.

"But I want examples," said Lord Cleveland.

"Surely your memory must be full of them," answered Herbert. "In ancient Rome, even the very triumphs (when, if at any time, the principle might be forgotten) provided for its perpetuation. For there was this moral always to be gathered, in the midst of what outraged all morality (a triumph)—that in the very ear of victory, the General was attended by a sort of remembrancer, whose business was to remind him of the uncertainties of greatness, and the possibility of reverse."

"Yet the term *felix* may be applied to many a person in history," observed the Earl, "who seemed never to think of reverse—"

"Until it came," answered the President: "the term was particularly applied by Cicero to Pompey, as recommendatory of him to a great command—yet who so miserable in the end?"

"What think you of Sylla?" asked Lord Cleveland.

"What do you of Marius?" answered the Doctor. "But even as to Sylla, whose good fortune was by heathenish blindness imputed as a crime to the gods, I would gladly have foregone all the heathenish happiness of his epitaph,* to have escaped the horror of his death.† There is another example."

"Have a care," cried Cleveland, "for we are getting into pedantry."

"Well, and I am by profession a pedant," said the Doctor; "so the ladies will only think I am in my vocation."

"Pedantry or not," said Lady Clanellan, "the ladies, I assure you, will think they have a right to illustrations of a subject that interests them, as well as the gentlemen."

"Well, then, I mean Polycrates," said the Doctor. I love his history, not so much for himself as for the different philosophy that governed him and his friend Amasis. 'You are too fortunate,' said Amasis: 'inflict some great mortification upon yourself, or the gods

* That no man had gone beyond him in doing good to his friends and harm to his enemies.

† By the *morbus pediculosus*.

will abandon you.' Polycrates threw his ring into the sea, which was swallowed by a fish. The fish is caught, and the ring restored. 'See what a favourite of Fortune I am,' says Polycrates. 'I renounce you for it,' writes Amasis; 'you will be ruined.' Polycrates became hardened with prosperity, and was dethroned and crucified."

Here the Doctor paused.

"With my leave," said Lady Eleanor, "no one shall ever call you pedantic but yourself. These examples are full of interest, and will make us think for a week."

"Your Bibles," returned the Divine, "(for I really believe you are not ashamed of your Bibles,) would do it much better; and though, I dare say, I run a risk (looking at Lord Cleveland,) of not being thought of *proper monde*, yet as a poor parson may by just a possibility be forgiven for quoting the Bible, I would venture to remind you of a great man called Nebuchadnezzar."

"Oh, let us have him by all means," cried Lord Cleveland.

"It will do all over-confident people good," replied Herbert; "yet it is all comprised in two little verses.

'The king spake and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom, *by the might of my power and the honour of my majesty?*

'While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven: saying, O! King Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken, thy kingdom is departed from thee.'"

The party were silent for some time after the Doctor had ended. For in fact his example, and his manner of reciting it, had impressed them with something like awe.

"'Tis a memorable lesson," said Lady Clanellan, with great seriousness, "and I am almost ashamed to have treated Lady Constance's fear with so much heedlessness."

"There is another example still," proceeded Herbert, "which though only found in the effusions of poetry, is yet so natural, so approaching to the realities of

life, and so beautifully painted, that I own I have often dwelt upon it with a pleasure and awfulness conjoined, that generally overcame me."

The whole party looked eager with inquiry.

"'Tis of Eve," continued the Divine; "poor, weak, but well-intentioned, though over-weening Eve! Who can peruse that anxious portrait of her, falling into the jaws of condemnation and death, in the very moment of her proudest confidence; who, that has loved her before, for her thousand graces, yet sees her cut off in the midst of happiness, but must, as a mere moralizer, feel himself plunged in distress? But who that reads this in the inimitable song that records it, and is not moved to the quick by the pathos of the language, and the fearfulness of the example?" Here Herbert seemed rapt, and then broke out with lines which affected his hearers almost as much as they did himself.

> "Oh! much deceiv'd, much failing, hapless Eve,
> Of thy presum'd return—event perverse!
> Thou never, from that hour, in Paradise,
> Found'st either sweet repast, or sound repose;
> Such ambush, hid among sweet flow'rs and shades,
> Waited, with hellish rancour imminent,
> To intercept thy way, and send thee back,
> Despoil'd of innocence—of faith—of bliss!"

The subject, the language, and the manner in which this was repeated, here got the better both of the speaker and his audience. Constance, whom they peculiarly affected, from thinking of her impressions the evening before, was moved even to tears; De Vere's heart recoiled within him; and even the Earl reddened, from his better feelings having suddenly mastered him.

But though even *he* felt much the force of sympathy, it too much resembled weakness in his mind, for him not to make an effort to check it. He did himself little good, however, with the natural and unsophisticated Constance, when repressing his feelings he observed, "Your poetry, my dear Doctor, is beautiful; but your reasoning upon all your examples goes no farther than mere conjecture."

"*Conjecture!*" exclaimed Herbert. "Is it really

no more, that there is a Power, invisible indeed, but certain, who at this moment sees and hears us?"

"We are going too deep," said Lord Cleveland.

"You did not think so when you hazarded your observation; for, to come to the conclusion that what we have been speaking of is nothing but conjecture, you must have gone to the very bottom of the subject, and at least settled that our opinion is not capable of proof."

The Earl hesitated.

"Lord Cleveland," said De Vere, "you cannot answer this."

A short silence ensued.

"Come," proceeded Herbert; "what would you say, if, wherever you turned, whatever you were doing, whatever thinking, in public or private, with a confidential friend telling your secrets, or alone planning them (but especially the latter); if, I say, you actually saw an eye perpetually fixed upon you, from whose watching, though you strove ever so much, you could never escape?"

"The supposition is awful enough," answered Cleveland; a sentiment which the whole company echoed.

"And even if you closed your own eye to avoid it," continued the Doctor, "you found that to get rid of it was impossible; that it still stared at you, entered your very brain, and into the region of thought itself."

"I beseech you come to your conclusion," cried Cleveland, "for I don't like the supposition at all, though it is merely visionary."

"Well then," said the Divine, "would you hold that such an eye did not demonstrate that there was personality somewhere (though you could not see the rest of it), to which the eye belonged, and which personality was ever near you? Would it, I say, only be *conjecture* that there was such personality, though all but the eye were invisible?"

"If the supposition were true," answered Cleveland, "I would admit the consequence."

"There *is* such an eye," observed Herbert.

"Yes!" replied Cleveland, trying to be gay; "but only in the Book of Common Prayer. For I now remember it in a picture at the beginning of the service *of the fifth of November*; and it interested me much as

a child, because it was drawn with rays issuing out of it, which discovered the gunpowder plot. But I *was* a child, and only as a child liked and believed it, as other children did."

"Yet the children were right," replied the Divine, "though they might mistake the process of their belief. When grown to men, from seeing their mistake as to this process, and that there is no such real eye visible to their own, they begin to doubt, or feel hard of belief—as some timorous people are valiant after the disappearance of a ghost. Nevertheless the children's is the true account. And I would again ask, if this does not lead to something far deeper than conjecture?"

The conviction of the company left Herbert without an answer.

"I allow, however," continued the President, "it is not common to have these impressions. The soul must be attuned to them in something like abstraction from the business and struggles of the world. In crowds we are too much interrupted; in the race of self-interest, we are too much perverted; in camps we are struggling for life and death; in courts we see none but the eye of a human sovereign. Nevertheless, the Divine eye is always upon us; and whilst we least think of it, is noting all, and, whatever we may think, be assured, will remember all."

Lord Cleveland tried to laugh off the seriousness which this occasioned; and after a few light speeches which did him no good with Constance, observed with raillery, if not with something like a sneer, that no doubt the Divine, who seemed to know so much about it, must, in his secret communings with supernatural power, have seen this eye.

"To say I have seen it visible to sense," replied Herbert, "would not only mock the truth, but my own supposition, which was, that there was no such object operating upon material organs. But these communings are not the less real for all that."

"And you have experienced them?"

"I have; and (laugh as you please) have always felt the better for them."

"Perhaps you have heard voices too?"

"*I have!*"

"Sounding in your ear?"

"In the ear,—no!"

"In the heart?"

"Yes!—Nor is there any one, I believe, so sophisticated by bad habits, or corroded by worldliness, as not, at one time or other, to have heard the voice of his Maker, in that Maker's inimitable works. It is not the less real, because we know not how it produces its effects. In this respect, it is like the music of enchantment, which all of you may have admired in the song of that divine man who so well describes it;—music which seems

> 'To breathe
> Above, about, or underneath,
> Sent by some spirit to mortals' good,
> Or the unseen genius of the wood.'"

He ceased, and all the party were silent for some minutes. The ideas with which he concluded sank deep into their hearts, and still fascinated their attention. In fact, all were afraid to lose, by interrupting him, whatever farther he might have to say;—and for a while they were lost in mental abstraction.

At length, the President having finally concluded, he received the warm thanks of his little audience for the satisfaction he had afforded them. Constance alone was silent; for her feelings were too deep for utterance: but her looks showed that the obligation was not the less felt, because unexpressed; and when they proceeded with their walk, she found herself, uninvited, putting her arm within Herbert's, in a manner so frank, and at the same time so modest, that whilst it delighted the person whom she so distinguished, it appeared to please almost all the rest of the party. She gained by it with De Vere, as we hope she will with the reader. For, amongst all the traits of a young and naïve girl, we know none so pleasing as the pleasure she sometimes feels, (and shows she feels,) in a familiar and sanctioned intercourse with a man much her senior, to whose wisdom she defers, and on whose kindness she relies. In this instance, Constance's long acquaintance with Herbert, who had known her from a child, her

respect for him, and the obligation he had just seemed to confer upon her, in satisfying her heart on points vital to its happiness, seemed to make this pleasure doubly natural; and her manner of showing it (fresh and charming as her youth) interested all who saw it, and above all, De Vere.

CHAPTER II.

A MORTIFIED MAN OF QUALITY.

Trust me, I am exceeding weary.
Is it come to that? I had thought weariness durst not have attacked one of so high blood.

SHAKSPEARE.

LORD CLEVELAND was not of a temper, any more than of habits, to be satisfied with the situation, in which he was left in the last chapter: for not only he felt he had made no way with Constance during the birth-day, but it was evident that the elder ladies, who had appeared so much his friends at first, were so no longer; and, though for this he would have cared little in itself, yet, as an indication of his position with Constance, it was ruinous to his hopes.

"It is strange," said he to himself, "how fond old people are of interfering with young; and stranger still, how the young will permit it. Let us see, however, whether this sober, serious, fair one, can stand a winter in town."

He then remembered his observations on the masque, evidently overheard by these eternal old ladies, and evidently communicated to Lady Constance, with no good result to the critic. The bard cousin was only in greater favour; and now the good Doctor seemed to have given a finishing blow to Cleveland's morning hopes. For, delighted with the distinction with which his young friend treated him, and being a stout and quick walker, Herbert fairly carried off Constance, far

before the rest of the party, to the Dairy-house; nor did the lightness and airiness of her step, or the symmetry and grace which the folds of her drapery, agitated by the breeze, disclosed, at all contribute to deaden the admiration of this once puissant and haughty lord of fashion, whose attention was thought honour by all the rest of the world.

Left behind by the only being whom he sought as a companion, to arrange his feelings, as he might, with persons whom he began to dislike, and almost to hate, his natural moroseness when thwarted, broke out; and he gave himself twenty times to the devil, for having ever thought of talking divinity with a divine. The effects of this did not soothe him: his brow was knit; his chest swelled; and he strove in vain to disguise a sense of mortification, (certainly unusual with him,) by humming an Opera tune. At last, finding his good breeding fast fading before his rising anger, he fairly turned round, after falling back a few paces, and without apology or excuse abandoned his company, and sought to restore his happiness among the political friends he had left at the Castle.

And now, let those who have been used to follow this supposed favourite of fortune with admiring (some of them with envious) eyes—let those whose minds, as ill-regulated as his own, fancied him the happiest of the happy, because apparently the gayest of the gay —dive if possible into his heart, and there gather the lesson that will or will not do good to their own, by the use they make of it.

Thwarted in his pride as much as in his love, and vexed to the quick from disappointment in both, Cleveland endeavoured to fill himself with contempt for the softer passion, as unworthy the aspirations of a man born for power. In particular, he endeavoured to lash himself into resentment against the soft and pure creature who had, but an hour before, been the object of his most fervent admiration.

In this last attempt he completely failed. It is true, he was indignant at finding his high-sounding name, which had been accustomed to give the law both to men and to women, utterly disregarded; and the of-

fender seemed guilty of little less than treason against the majesty of his reputation. Secretly, therefore, he meditated severe retaliation, both upon her and De Vere, of whom he had become cruelly jealous. But the traitress herself, and all that belonged to her, by which we mean the beautiful train of graces and virtues which every where followed her, had got so deeply into his breast, that no resolve, however proud—no feeling, however indignant—could displace her. Thus, like the giant Polypheme, he felt himself endowed with a strength which, as such, nothing could resist; but which, under his fatal abuse of it, could only terrify and disgust—not win the heart he coveted. Like the same giant, he struggled in vain to quell the rage which tore him, by pondering mischief which might gratify his revenge, but which could not cure his love.

'Twas as a mere momentary diversion that he sought out his political friends, who were all in close divan at the Castle when he joined them; but though he saw them in raised and elated spirits, his own, to their surprise, were disturbed and sour; and he was in no humour to give them the lights or the hope they expected from him.

'Tis a maxim of La Rochefoucauld, "*Qu'on passe souvent de l'amour à l'ambition, mais on ne revient guères de l'ambition à l'amour;*" and La Rochefoucauld thought at least that he knew something of the heart. But his own Henri IV. might have taught him differently; for while Henri was perhaps the most ambitious monarch in Europe, he was at the *same* time the most ardent lover. Neither Henri Quatre nor Lord Cleveland passed from love to ambition, by way of curing the one by the other.—In the souls of both, each passion reigned triumphant, and in the Earl we have described them as holding a divided empire. Hence, though, as we have stated, he sought in politics a diversion from the mortifications of the morning, he was surprised himself at the little vigour he felt in entering into the reasons for instant departure, which Lord Mowbray and Eustace set before him, founded upon very important letters from town. Nevertheless, by degrees the discussions interested *him, and* compared with his immediate struggle,

"With a pleasing sorcery could charm
Pain for awhile or anguish."

That struggle, however, coloured all his deliberations on the question of Lord Oldcastle's requisitions: could his going have mortified Constance he would instantly have set out; but as he felt, with a sigh of affronted pride, that it would be just the most pleasing thing in the world to her, he wished, and almost resolved to stay. He listened, however, to all that was urged (cogently enough) by Lord Oldcastle's letters, as well as by Eustace, to induce him not to be a moment out of the King's sight; or even, if possible, one yard from his elbow, until something was decided on the future ministry.

"And yet," said Cleveland, "I see no reason for leaving the Castle at present. The lion is not dead, though he may sleep; and I have a royal support in my pocket; a support which must bear down every thing that opposes."

"You have not Mr. Wentworth's support," said the young Eustace, who spoke *con amore* the sentiments of his father; "and no one can tell the result of his influence."

"Personally he has none," said Lord Cleveland.

"On the contrary," returned Eustace, "in my father's own language, all the influence he has is personal. Like the Minister himself, his power depends upon his abilities alone, and great have they made him. Should his continuance or promotion, therefore, be made a stipulation in the closet, who would oppose it?"

"That would I," replied Cleveland, warming; "particularly if his *promotion* were in question, though a question which I do not understand can ever be made."

"It is said," observed Eustace, "he has given out that he will be all or nothing."

"Then shall he be nothing," replied the haughty nobleman, growing warmer and warmer.

Lord Mowbray was uneasy, and observed, how devoutly it were to be wished that Mr. Wentworth and

Lord Oldcastle could be brought to act together, for that till that was done, he feared no ministry could be considered on a safe and lasting foundation.

This was a phrase Lord Mowbray was peculiarly fond of, and denoted always in his mind that state of things which he considered as equal to the millennium itself in this world, and for which he possibly would have commuted many of his chances of happiness in the next. As the question however was of immense consequence, and in that nice and difficult state with which Lord Mowbray's powers were not precisely calculated to deal, he asked leave to call in Mr. Clayton to the council, as a prudent and confidential young man.

This met with a decided negative on the part of Cleveland, and a threat to break off all connexion with Lord Mowbray, if he did not solemnly pledge himself, henceforward to have neither eyes, nor ears, nor speech, except as he, Lord Cleveland, should permit; a pledge which the descendant of the Mowbrays hesitated not a moment to give. The result was, that the political trio should leave the Castle the next day, to provide, as they said, for the exigencies of the state, which might be endangered, if their rival had time to strengthen himself in Cleveland's absence.

Constance was allowed the choice of establishing herself for the winter in town, (for in those days October was ignorantly thought the beginning of winter,) or to remain with her aunt at the Castle. Clayton of course was to accompany his patron; but De Vere being mentioned, a most determined interdict by the all-powerful Minister expectant was put upon any attempt of his uncle to incorporate him in the party. Lord Mowbray, to give him his due, was certainly not entirely at his ease upon this. It was even said that he looked discontented, and twice essayed to speak, but this was never proved. Lord Eustace, in a better spirit, combated this resolution, as far as a young candidate for power, and determined party man, dared combat any thing with a person who, he thought, was to be the future disposer of his fortune. But Cleveland said he was sick of the very name of De Vere; that he

was calculated for nothing but a sour rebel; that there were methodists in politics, as well as in religion; that he was one of them, and would betray, if not ruin, any party to which he might belong.

Eustace reddened, and his heart felt one or two quicker pulses in it at this disparagement of his friend; nor perhaps did he quite give Lord Cleveland credit for being actuated on this occasion solely by solicitude for the common cause. Eustace had, indeed, from nature, much of the honest feelings of his age, nor were they yet cankered with the great passion so far as to make it easy for him to listen quietly to the opinion that coolly attempted to destroy a friend's character, and consign his hopes for ever to ruin. He, therefore, though with some hesitation, ventured a sort of remonstrance with the Earl, upon a treatment, so unexpected, of a man, who, from his reputation and independent vote, to say nothing of his connexions, might prove a grace to the party.

But Cleveland knew his man; and after giving him, therefore, due credit for his fidelity, calmly asked him if he was prepared to plead for a connexion with a person who had declared to himself he would belong to no party.

Eustace quoted a maxim of his father, that the true way to deal with such men, if they were worth having, was to enlist them into office, though the appointment were ever so small.

In reply, Cleveland desired to know if he would enlist one who favoured the enemy? and then informed him of De Vere's acknowledged predilection for Wentworth. He did not add to the information, De Vere's unhesitating refusal, not many hours before, to accept a great post, the moment he heard that Eustace had claims upon it. The party feeling of the aspiring Eustace was therefore kindled; and in the true legitimate spirit of that feeling, he instantly gave up his friend, without scruple, and almost without regret.

And is it so in the noble career of ambition? And is it thus that a young bosom of five-and-twenty, open, warm, and alive to all generosity of sentiment in

other respects, can close upon an early affection, fidelity to which is the very characteristic of its age?

All this? Ay, more! For while it lasts, in the whole range of mental poison, nothing corrodes like party spirit. It seems, by some demoniacal magic, to change our very being; inflames the life blood itself, and penetrates the wholesome system of the patient, who knows not himself while under its influence.

It was this, no doubt, which caused that havoc in the heart and understanding of a man, who, had he lived in gentler times, was made for all the gentler virtues; but who, in a time of terror, became ferocious and strange to his nature, from the influence of this dreadful spirit. Startle not, Reader, when we pronounce the name of William Russel. Formed for all the graces of private life, and full of a high sense of public duty, his amiable and patriotic character was imbued with the brutality of a savage, through the fatal feeling we are describing; and the man who loves him for his goodness, and respects him for his sincerity, starts from him with horror, when he contemplates him under the goadings of this feeling, not only pursuing an innocent old man to death, but denying, without a colour of reason, the power of the crown to soften the manner of that death into a mere deprivation of life, instead of inflicting it by the most horrible torments.

To a power of causing such shocking transformations, to such poison of the mind, may we not apply what was once so energetically applied to a real poison of the body. "Oh! thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let's call thee Devil."*

* Take a milder, but scarcely less illustrative instance, in Pulteney, who so hated his opponents in the Ministry that he could not bear them to do good. Writing to Swift, he wishes they would provide for him, "And yet," says he, "methinks, now I consider it, and reflect who they are, *I should be sorry they had the merit of doing so right a thing.* As well as I wish you, I would rather not have you provided for, than provided for by people I don't like." Swift must have been very much obliged to him, and, in truth, it was a very Christian-like spirit! But what says Swift himself, writing in all the dignity of history, or at least of a preface to a

De Vere being given up, the Earl, triumphant in his measures, broke up his little council, and felt already the temporary consolation of a ruined mind, in having, as he thought, made one step, at least, towards his revenge. In this temper, on quitting his associates, he fell in with Clayton, exactly as Clayton, who had watched his motions, designed he should fall in with him.

Though in many points the characters of these worthies were as opposite as light and darkness, there were some in which they were disposed to be allied. Each had a spirit of intrigue, and neither was restrained in his intrigues by any very nice sense of honour, gratitude, or delicacy. At this moment, though from different motives, each was actuated by views not very favourable to the interests of De Vere. The hostility of the Earl was derived from jealousy, and a desire of vengeance, both against him and Constance. Clayton was jealous and revengeful too, but his political views having swallowed up his jealousy with his love, which he saw was hopeless, he cared not for revenge, except as his views of advancement were combined with it. The penetration of Cleveland had discovered many of these views, and his own intrigues in the De Vere borough, had enabled him to detail many of Clayton's projects there. It was convenient to the Lord Cleveland to turn all this to account, and as convenient to Mr. Clayton to allow himself to be so turned. The one satisfied his vengeance, the other his interest. When they met, therefore, the train was laid.

The Earl opened first; and knowing Clayton's passion for familiarity with the great, took him by his

history which was to astonish and enlighten the world. "I freely confess, it appeared *necessary as well as natural* upon such a mighty change, that those who were to be in power upon the succession, and resolved to act in every point by a direct contrary system of politics, "*should load their predecessors with as much infamy as the most inveterate malice and envy could suggest,* or the most stupid ignorance and credulity in the underlings could swallow."—Pref. to Four Last Years of Queen Anne.

Happier time present! when a sense of justice seems to temper the most violent party feeling; and violence itself shows its spirit in fair open conflict; while private ebullitions of envy, much more *of malignity, are thought* ungentlemanly.

weak point, by telling him he was the very man he wanted to see. He then walked him off to a distant part of the park, observing he had much to say to him of a confidential nature; that he was a rising fellow, and had many useful talents, discretion, and tact; with many other cajoleries of the same intoxicating nature.

Had Cleveland been any thing but a peer, and a king's favourite, Clayton would have instantly suspected this flattery. As it was, his propensity to the confidence of high personages blinded him into the most soothing notions of his own self-consequence, and he felt a sort of elysium at the praises of a man whose sincerity he had too often heard questioned, not to question it himself.

Perhaps the reader would not wish to see unfolded all that passed at this conference; in which, however, it would not be unamusing to detect the skill with which each party endeavoured to sound the other in their respective objects; Cleveland, to ascertain how far he could make Clayton instrumental, either by working on Lord Mowbray, or the parties themselves, in separating De Vere and Constance; Clayton, to gather more exactly than he had hitherto done, what was passing in regard to the expected change in politics.

But Cleveland's was the master mind; and, without disclosing more than was necessary of his political secret, he succeeded, as he had often done with others, in fixing Clayton in all his views. The feeling, indeed, of the *parvenu* towards Constance, had long been turning to dislike, from the slights he had met with; and towards De Vere he had just that sort of indefinable ill will, which conscious inferiority of character, and an uneasy sense of obligation, always give to a mind incapable of any sentiment but that of self.

CHAPTER III.

DISSIPATION.

She's a most triumphant lady, if report be square with her.
SHAKSPEARE.

It was not long before the seeds sown by Lord Cleveland began to sprout, if not to fructify. Transplanted from the simple pleasures of her Arcadian reign, to preside in the less sequestered, but more brilliant circles of artificial life, Constance was now the companion of her father in London. That is to say, they met (though not always) at breakfast; generally (but by no means always) at dinner; and at great dinners, of which Lord Mowbray gave not a few, she did the honours (for at that epoch ladies did do the honours of their own tables) with admirable grace. She was, of course, surrounded by the *beau monde*, and received homage which might have turned a weaker head, and hardened a heart less modest than her own. But she could not forget the gracious feelings which had characterized those birth-night emotions we have lately described, and produced a frame of mind for which she had felt the better ever since.

The course of a London life was little friendly to such feelings. She knew this, and lamented it; nor ceased to wonder what it was that rendered her mind less open to impressions, which she here courted too often in vain; while, removed but a hundred miles off, they offered themselves spontaneously, and were welcomed with delight whenever they offered. Why was a town so barren, and woods and fields so fertile, in ideas which seemed to exalt and purify our nature, and bring us closer to nature's God? What was there in a walk in Grosvenor-square, so different from a walk in the groves of Castle Mowbray? What, on the banks of the Thames, so contrasted with the banks of the Dove, that the same individual should not seem the same creature in the one place and in the other?

These are profound questions, affecting the theory of a life in the world, which we dare not attempt to fathom; but which, as they seem to depend upon a particular sort of air, we must leave to physiologists. Though, as humble moralizers, we might presume to give a reason for them too, but for the fear of those imperial and imperious persons who preside at the head of fashion. Now, every body knows that fashion is confined to London, or, at most, to Chiswick, Roehampton, or Richmond; and these leaders of it, if one ventured to talk of a walk, as we did just now, would exclaim with Millamant,

"I nauseate walking, 'tis a country diversion! I loathe the country, and every thing that relates to it."

Of these persons, we confess our fear—while in town. For remove them but fifty miles, provided it be not to a watering-place, and, if they are not soured or deadened by ennui, they often turn out to be very amiable and even rational persons: and a Countess who has been a fine lady in the one place, has been known to prove a very good sort of woman in the other.

Thus, a lady of high rank and most refined education, has been seen to mask herself in silly exclusiveness during a whole visit, towards one of her father's oldest friends; nor, though acquainted with him herself, has she vouchsafed one single word to him, *in London;* when, to the same person, who did not laugh at her the less for it, when he has visited her in her remote chateau, she has been all goodness, smiles, and affability, and has professed how pleasant it was to receive a visit from so old a friend—in the country.

We own this is beyond us exactly to unravel; unless, as has been suspected, there is really something morbid in the air of a London square, (for it does not rage with quite so much violence in the inferior streets,) which affects the mind, as it certainly may the body; but this, as we have said, we leave to the physiologists, not without feeling uneasy, and almost anxious, to think that the inexperienced Constance is about to be exposed to the all-powerful contagion.

For Constance did not shut her eyes to the passing

scene. She had a taste for elegance as well as a soul attuned to feeling. She was particularly sensible to refinement of every kind; and, perhaps, was only restrained from carrying it nearly to enthusiasm, by possessing a larger portion of good sense, than almost ever fell to the lot of one of her age.

Yet, of that age she entered into the pleasures, and it must be owned largely, for they courted her on every side. Far from being restrained, she was even encouraged in them by her father; which rather surprised those who knew how little he cared for them himself. But they did not know that he had been taught by the Cleveland to turn even his daughter's pleasures to account, in improving his political influence.

"You know not," said the Earl to him, "the inestimable advantage you possess in so powerful a coadjutrix. You may make Mowbray House the centre of all attraction, and it will be your own fault if you do not convert it into *political* attraction. The young men of consequence will be too happy to lay their parliamentary trophies (and there are few others now-a-days,) at her feet. Her elegance will put any one into fashion, and there are a number of excellent partizans who want to be in fashion more even than to be popular. These are all certain prey. Let Lady Constance but give them one protecting, much more an encouraging nod, for being good boys in the House, and you will find your Treasury-bench guarded by a band of Janizaries.

The project pleased. Lady Constance was encouraged by her father to render Mowbray House the focus of elegant pleasure; which, seeing no harm in it, and foreseeing no consequences, she did not oppose. On the contrary, it required little argument to persuade a girl still under age, beaming with health and nymph-like with grace, that to give half a dozen balls was a measure both wise and innocent. Nor was there greater difficulty in proving that a fine house ought to be opened to fine people; and that to make it a rendezvous of all that was brilliant in the nation, whether for wit, eloquence, or eminence of any kind, was only suitable to a lady of the condition and endowments of Lord Mowbray's *daughter*.

Accordingly, in addition to the usual number of fêtes given by a family of their rank, a regular weekly supper was established, on the nights of those days when there had been a drawing-room at Court, to the unspeakable joy of Lady Elizabeth and all the Partridges, as well as Clayton, who never failed in their attendance upon it. The house, also, was thrown open on stated evenings to a select society, (but, particularly, those of any political consequence,) who were sure to find elegant amusement, and what was meant to be agreeable conversation.

These parties (still by Lord Cleveland's advice, though the adviser kept himself concealed from Constance,) were made by degrees more and more select; so as to be, what, in the present day, would be called *exclusive*, with the exceptions of members of parliament and persons of parliamentary influence. Admission to them, therefore, became more and more an object of desire, from difficulty; while the fashion, accomplishments, and beauty of the Lady Constance became the theme of every tongue. In short, the politic Earl's plan succeeded, and Lord Mowbray was in ecstacy to think, that to be invited to the suppers or parties of his daughter, was deemed fully equal in itself to the value of a vote upon all difficult questions.

But all this was without the knowledge of her who was the load-star that set every thing in motion; for of the exact views of her father in promoting, and still more of the share which Lord Cleveland had in advising it, she was absolutely unconscious. She only observed, and (for why should we deny it?) her heart dilated with pleasure in doing so, that the *petits soupers*, the music, the foreigners of distinction, and, above all, the party associations to be found in the society of Mowbray House, had become the delight of the *haute noblesse*, and the admiration of all who pretended to be of any fashion in the metropolis.

In effecting this, Lord Mowbray had but a single object: and, as we have seen, was the blind follower of another's genius. But the policy of that other had a double aspect. He had proposed to himself, for reasons which have been glanced at, to plunge Constance

into a dangerous dissipation; and he had also observed on the Continent, the powerful influence of female attraction, diffused, as it might be, through a variety of channels, in subserviency to the views of ambition. Both his objects were promoted by the advice he gave to Lord Mowbray. Nor, in respect to politics, let any one think this either out of nature, or unprecedented. To be sure, our downright ancestors seldom gave assemblies. The rivals for power in the state, wrestled for it in the Council-chamber or the Senate, almost as toughly as if really tugging in an arena, like regular Pancratiasts. They had no idea of the influence of a woman's smile, except as it led them to arms and battle. But while the power of the smile continued the same, other roads had been opened to obtain it. The tournament blazed no more; but the palm of eloquence, and the victory in political contest, might still be laid at woman's feet; and lovely woman still excited our youth to exertion, though of a different nature. How many, indeed, of our struggling statesmen have animated their own prowess, and kept a sometimes vacillating band together, by the adroit application of this potent instrument!

In the time we speak of, the enchantress of most power in this respect—she who afterwards so delighted the ear by her accomplishments, and the eye by her manners—she who made her house one glow of fascinating elegance, had not appeared, though she has now sunk from the scene, and left no peer behind. Cold and mouldered are those limbs, and mute that tongue, and glazed that eye, which once dazzled by their grace, won by their sweetness, or kindled by their lustre. But the exciting instrument of party even now remains; and is still used, even in this matter-of-fact age; when, either from the changed hearts of the men, or the inferior powers of the women, it has lost much of its influence.

But at the epoch we are commemorating, Constance, though only a morning star which preceded suns in full glory, was already gazed at with fervour; and the adroit Lord Cleveland, while he worshipped this brilliant star himself, converted its brilliancy skilfully to

his purpose with others. In doing this, however, he had another and still deeper view than even to serve his ambition. By abstracting Constance (through the seductive amusements, and the flattery or self-consequence which we have mentioned) from that serious and reflective disposition which was always his enemy, he thought he might remove a powerful bar to his own still unabandoned wishes. He might even rid himself of the most powerful obstacle of all; for such, Clayton had confirmed him in fearing De Vere to be.

"If I can but make her thoroughly dissipated," said he to himself, "De Vere will fly."

With this charitable view, he watched every movement at Mowbray House, and, always out of sight as a director, though always present as a spectator, the wheel went round for some time as he wished, and Constance had nearly been (we will not say lost, but) made giddy by its whirl.

It was not that her heart was at all changed by the excitements or the tumult of her life; it was not that she had become incapable of those lovely emotions which had so endeared her to those who knew and honoured her most: but, like the bewildered Rinaldo, she felt the influence of an enchanted garden; and so rapid was the vortex in which she found herself involved, that she had not time to be the Constance of the retirement, nor even of the revelries of Castle Mowbray, whom De Vere had so adored.

If any one wonder at this, after all that has been said of her, my only answer is, that Constance was a human creature, not one-and-twenty years of age, surrounded by admirers of every kind; some of them paying court to her rank, some to her elegance, many to her gaiety, all to her beauty. The old approved her dignity; the high, her refinement; the young, her cheerfulness; the gay, her taste for pleasure. Wherever she trod, flowers seemed to spring under her feet, and whichever way she turned, she was garlanded with admiration. Her presence thus diffusing happiness, and her every movement commanding applause, what wonder then, if her heart should for awhile have nearly forgotten its sobriety, or that she should drink

(some might say largely) of the cup of pleasure thus presented to her! On the other hand, there was no restraint on any part of her conduct; no monitress but her own bosom; while some very high dames, friends of Lord Cleveland, devotees of this world, and reckless of another, urged on her career by the most assailing flatteries.

This did not hurt her; but, left to herself, the danger was nearer home. For the reflective habit which Cleveland most feared, fell by degrees, at least into disuse; and she saw no harm in the temporary splendour of her life, because, knowing it had nothing to do with mind, she had resolved it should *be* but temporary.

Thus surrounded, thus plunged, Lord Cleveland deemed her already in the toils; and as London pleasures were his element, in which, to say the truth, he was by all considered as the *Arbiter elegantiarum*, he shone in his element, as other spirits shine. We must not be surprised, then, at the reports which daily gained ground, that the great Lord Cleveland and the beautiful heiress were soon to be united.

Mere report, however, did not satisfy many of those who fluttered about her; eminently, among the rest, the young Duke of Bellamont. Undaunted by the reputation, and, what is more, the alleged success of Lord Cleveland, he resolved to take neither report, nor denial, except from the lady's father, or herself. To the former, he opened his pretensions in form; to the latter he strove (and seemed to succeed) to make himself agreeable, by those attentions which, from one of his rank, youth, and real accomplishments, can never be regarded but with complacency by any well-bred female, whatever the result.

This filled Lord Cleveland with alarm: he even feared Lord Mowbray's fidelity. But he feared the lady more; for the Duke was the flower of the Court. Cleveland therefore redoubled his attentions; assumed the guise of a lover broke down with despair; talked of Lord Mowbray as a future Secretary of State; and every where watched Constance with the most keen anxiety.

And did no one else watch her? And had no one besides, observed her through the career we have been describing! Yes! and with an attention, though with very different motives, at least equal to that of Lord Cleveland. In fact, it is not easy to describe the intense, and almost painful interest with which De Vere now observed his cousin.

On their first arrival in London, he had not been surprised at, he had even promoted, that moderate dissipation, if it may be so called, which is not merely agreeable, but is sometimes even held to be salutary to those who have been much secluded. But when he found the whirl increase, without any great reluctance; when the revelry seemed to proceed upon system, and even assumed to be a sort of principle, he was startled, uneasy, and (as he said, without any right to be so) displeased. His heart, indeed, felt with pleasure the universal admiration which was paid to Constance; and he was not devoid of pride, when he saw the consequence, which, without intending, and almost without knowing it, she had communicated to her father in his party views. The wavering opinion of many a young man had been often fixed by a dinner or ball at Mowbray House; and that dinner or ball had been gladly accepted, because of the syren attraction of the beautiful hostess. With his own feelings, he could scarcely wonder at this.

Nor was the influence confined to politics, to subjects, to one sex, or one nation. The Sovereign and his Queen had talked of the grace of Constance, and had spoken of her as a favourite; and ladies who themselves were at the supreme head of society, were therefore emulous to have her as the partner of their reign. Foreigners who were at the head of Europe, and with whom, from her residence abroad, she felt much at her ease, proclaimed her the jewel of England. It was treason for them to depart the kingdom without having seen and conversed with her. Even the literati, as well as the dilettanti of the day, sought her auspices; and to behold her, as she sometimes was, surrounded by them, one would have supposed her either actually, or in danger of becoming, that anomalous character—

a woman of letters. But she never forgot her sex; and it was only in carrying the graces of that sex to their height, that during the whole winter she was considered the queen of refinement, and that ornament of the Court, and of the world, which all who had known her (De Vere among them) had prognosticated she would be.

"But though she be, and deserve to be, all this," said De Vere, "is her life the life she loves? Is it her choice? Is she happy? If she is, then all my dreams farewell!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE MASQUERADE.

What have I done, that thou darest wag thy tongue
In noise so rude against me?

SHAKSPEARE.

THE decided character of De Vere, bore him up under the bitterest disappointment his young life had yet experienced. His love for his cousin had been by far the strongest passion hitherto of his heart; far stronger, as we have seen, than such ambition as had been kindled in it more by sympathy and persuasion than by nature. That love had been opposed by honour; efficaciously opposed, as to any outward manifestation of it, but vainly as to the feeling itself. Indeed, as long as he retired before rivals of higher consequence, he thought he had performed his duty; and had acquired the right, if he pleased, of nursing in secret those feelings, which nothing, or at least no thought of their imprudence, can deprive of their sweetness, and on which the soul sometimes loves to dwell, spite of hopelessness itself.

But hope, as we may remember, was De Vere's mistress; and, as in his enthusiasm he asserted, she gave

him more happiness unenjoyed, than success itself.* But this was before he had seen Constance. His creed, therefore, was now put to the test; for not only had he the pretensions of a still more powerful rival than Cleveland to fear, in the person of the Duke of Bellamont, but he had his own reflections upon the changed disposition, as he thought it, of Constance herself, to silence, ere he could continue to nourish his heart with that sweet food ever so grateful to it. "I have watched her," said he, "anxiously, painfully, in this her new sphere; and I can detect no change of character, not even a lurking vanity, which once admitted, the mine of ruin is sprung, and she is the charming Constance no more. But no! it is impossible this life can be her choice!"

In a moment like this, he was once greeted by Clayton, who, perceiving the state of his feelings, did not fail to express his own astonishment also at the seeming power of the world over so unsophisticated a being. "Refinement, luxury, and a Duke, however," said Clayton, "may work strange metamorphoses."

De Vere changed colour at this coincidence of their thoughts; and Clayton, not without observing this effect, told him to watch the truth of his observation that night at a masquerade given by the Duke, at Bellamont-House; expressly, as asserted by all the town, for the Lady Constance.

'Twas a magnificent entertainment, furnished forth with all that could be supplied by the resources of England, or the taste of France. But I will not busy myself with golden descriptions of the grandeur of a Ducal house, or the glittering dazzle of ducal company; for amid the glare of costly furniture, the blazing of diamonds, and the gaiety of dresses, which seemed to have been dipped in the colours of the rainbow, nothing struck or interested more than the most simple, and least costly of all the objects that challenged observation. This was the compartments of a chalked floor in the ball room, full of elegant emblems, but round every one of which, in large letters, was the motto of "*Pour Elle.*"

* See Vol. I. his Letter to Herbert.

The superiority of mental curiosity over the mere dazzling of sense, was never more exemplified than by this; for while gold, crystal, and tortoise-shell, bronze and china, painting and enamel, courted the eye in vain, all eyes were fixed, and all minds at work, in discussing the meaning, and the person meant, by this portentous motto.

The heart of De Vere was at no loss to discover it; but his curiosity was outstretched to observe its effect upon her, for whom he thought it designed. Lord Cleveland indeed, pronounced that it was for another great lady of the Court, and so ushered it to the notice of Constance, who, though masked, and humbled into a Tyrolese peasant, could not deceive his practised penetration. De Vere, concealed by his dress, watched the effect of the intimation, which in truth was only important from its being believed in all simplicity, by the unpretending Constance; and this gave him some comfort. But to this there was an end, when Lady Clanellan, Constance's chaperon, who had left her for a moment, coming up, observed with seeming satisfaction, "The whole world say it is you."

The eye of De Vere was fixed upon Constance, and he was by no means relieved by observing from her manner, that she seemed greatly agitated by the intimation.

But the maskers now thronged the enchanted palace, (for so, while masking went on, it seemed,) and a variety of interests were excited by the various characters that courted observation. Among these a smooth tongued Comus was conspicuous for his wand, his cup, and his pleasing enunciation. Constance, whom he singled out, seemed the sole object of his pursuit. He noticed pointedly, but not coarsely, her pre-eminence in beauty, her former seclusion, and the hopes of the world that she would now continue among them, and never again think of the rusticity of her former life. He noticed too the still preserved simplicity of her dress, and advised her to change it for one like that of a beautiful sultana, who was glittering near her, and whom an ancient hermit had called in

her hearing, one of "the gay motes that people the sun-beams."

Constance would have retired, uncomfortable at being made the object of so much attention, but he pursued her, and after advising her to bestow herself on some prince of the Court, in appropriate strain addressed her thus:—

"List, lady, be not coy.
Beauty is Nature's coin—must not be hoarded;
If you let slip time, like a neglected rose,
It withers on the stock with languished head."

Here Constance sought to ecape; but she could not make her way through the crowd, and the pitiless enchanter went on—

"Coarse complexions,
And cheeks of sorry grain, will serve to ply
The sampler;
What need a vermeil tinctured lip for that?
Love darting eyes, and tresses like the morn?"

Here he presented his cup, and all within hearing of his address, were so pleased with the grace of his action, and the emphasis with which he had spoken, that their pleasure showed itself in a burst of applause. But it was an applause distressing to the object who had prompted his exertion, and who with some difficulty and evident displeasure, at length broke, as she hoped, from his spells.

But it was only for a moment; for, encountering her again, he snatched one of the roses from the chaplet which crowned her temples, and scattering its leaves at her feet, changed his lay, and thus went on—

"So passeth, in the passing of a day,
Of mortal life, the leaf, the bud, the flower;
No more doth flourish after first decay,
That erst was sought to deck both bed and bower;
Gather, therefore, the rose, while yet 'tis prime,
For soon comes age that will her pride deflower;
Gather the rose of love while yet 'tis time."

The enchanter then unbound his chaplet, which he presented to her; but it was instantly seized by the ancient hermit we before mentioned, who had eyed the whole scene, and exclaimed—

"Avaunt, seducer! foul son of guilt and pleasure!" but, to Constance's annoyance, she was not released by her deliverer from the notice of the by-standers, who seemed only more interested by the address of the hermit himself. He too told Constance he would present her with roses; and selecting first a modest opening bud, and then a flaunting full-blown flower from the chaplet, he addressed her in the same stanza as the enchanter—

"Ah! see who such fair thing doth fain to see,
In springing flowre the image of thy day;
Ah! see the virgin rose, how sweetly she
Doth first peep forth with bashful modestie,
That fairer seems the less ye see her may."

Great stress was laid by the hermit on this last line; when dropping the bud, and presenting the blown-rose, he went on—

"Lo! see soon after, how more bold and free,
Her bared bosome she doth broad display;
Lo! see soon after, how she fades, and falls away!"

At this conclusion, the rose fell from his hand, and was trodden under foot.

With all her self-possession, the delicate Constance felt this address, and the innuendo it seemed to convey, even more than the direct persuasions of Comus. She experienced, indeed, no little indignation at being thus accosted; but she also felt something very like shame, which, as she reflected on it, amounted even to grief. She perceived she was the gaze of the public eye, and feared she might be the theme of the public scrutiny. She was frightened, and displeased, both with herself and others; and, at any rate, thought unwarrantable liberties had been taken with her by whoever represented Comus, and even still more by the hermit.

As Lord Cleveland, who had been in a domino, had

disappeared, she at first suspected him of being the enchanter; but this the youthful figure, mien and voice of the mask forbade; and for the Duke—she hoped it was not he; for she felt the whole thing an absolute insult. Then as to the hermit! it was a worse consideration still; for in truth, his remonstrances were less bearable than the other's advice. Ah! if it could be Mortimer! that Mortimer whom she had often observed watching her with anxiety, but with whom she had lately had but little of their former confidential intercourse. "Ah no!" said she, "it cannot be;—he never would be so disrespectful—he would have counselled me in private."

Yet neither the Duke, nor De Vere appeared in any recognizable character, and suspicion at last got such strong hold on her, and with an impression so sickening, that she felt dispirited, and really ill. Through the aid of Lady Clanellan therefore, who, though her chaperon, had not hitherto been able to defend her, she made her retreat good at an hour far earlier than any of the rest of the company; for her *pendule* had only struck one, as she entered her chamber for the night. Here, throwing herself into a chair, far other reflections assailed her than those we have recorded on her birthnight. They were not indeed altogether of a different nature; but they were more distressing, because attended with less comfort Moreover, she had no Herbert to instruct her; no Lady Eleanor to advise with; and as for Mortimer, their way of life had long prevented all private communication between them. She dreaded being changed, and would have given the world had the world charmed her less than it appeared to have done.

In this situation she was disposed to any thing rather than sleep; nor did she even court it by the customary appliances; for, far from thinking of bed, but contenting herself with throwing off her dress, which, simple as it was, seemed the livery of a dissipation she regretted, she passed half the remainder of the night, lost in her reflections.

Those reflections were not happy; for after severely taxing her heart with many things, which, though of

no very deep die, seemed to press heavily upon it, she confessed the inefficacy of her present life to give her the contentment, for which alone she appeared formed. "I am indeed," said she, "one of the gay motes that people the sun beams," and like them deserve no better than to be dispersed by any passing breath. Liberties have been taken with me; I have been held up to public criticism,—and whom have I to blame?"

She then again returned to an uneasy question as to the persons who could have so unwarrantably exposed her to public attention, by addresses which, even if uttered in private, had been by no means agreeable to her. The loftier part of her character here showed itself; and whether the maskers of whose intrusion she complained, were friends of the Duke of Bellamont, or if one of them was the Duke himself, a sort of hauteur took possession of her, and she considered the whole affair as an affront to her delicacy, which she felt called upon to mark with displeasure. "The higher the rank," said she, "the greater the necessity for not letting it pass unregarded." Then softening into those more tender and humbler feelings, which always rendered her so touching; "Alas!" thought she, "what right have I to be angry, who have myself so much to repent, so much to be pardoned? If we are all extreme to mark what is done amiss, who may abide it?"

With these reflections, her feeling upon the recent disrespect, as she could not help considering it, lost every thing there was of a haughty character about it, and for awhile she was alive only to her own thoughtless conduct, in having encouraged these liberties by the dissipation of her life. "Were this to go on," continued she, much agitated, "to what might it not lead?" Then hastily running over her career, from the time she had left the peaceful precincts of Castle Mowbray; she felt tremblingly obliged to confess that, amidst much seeming pleasure, she had scarcely enjoyed one self-approving hour, since she had exchanged her rural reign, for her thronged temple in the midst of the world. Nevertheless, this compunction, sincere as it was, seemed no excuse for the Duke or his Hermit. "I may lose credit with myself," said she,

"but it is not for others to show me I have done so;" and this produced a resolution, if her suspicions were proved upon the Duke, to show her sense of it by a determined alteration of behaviour. Proof was not long wanting, for the actor of so conspicuous a part could not be concealed. Her sense of the liberty was marked, accordingly, by a coldness in her manner towards the Duke, which, though never ungentle, was always, from that time forth, too reserved and dignified to give the smallest encouragement to his hopes. As to the Hermit, she was in some measure relieved by discovering, through Mortimer himself, whom she had at first feared, that Harclai, who was in town, had been the person who had so annoyed her. She resolved at least to profit by the lesson; for though she found herself so plunged in dissipation that it was not easy suddenly to recede from it, the little satisfaction her self-examinations gave her, could only find relief from other and better resolutions. These, she hoped, would restore her to that self-respect, without which, the simplest daughter of humble life may be an object of envy to a queen.

CHAPTER V.

POLITICAL EXPECTATION.

Who are the violets now,
That strew the green lap of the new come Spring?
SHAKSPEARE.

For the sake of pursuing the history of Constance in her new life without interruption, we stopped the current of general events, which yet, in other respects, had been most important to all the actors in our story. These events concurred powerfully, with other motives emanating from all we have just related in connexion with his cousin, to affect the conduct of De Vere, both in regard to his ambition and his love.

Upon the arrival of the Castle party in town, their whole attention was occupied with what occupied every body, the expected dereliction of power by the Minister. But the plans laid by Lord Cleveland and his allies gave that band of party associates peculiar and incessant employment. De Vere was, as may be supposed, excluded from these councils.

But the looked-for resignation did not so immediately take place as was expected; there was even a talk of a continuance in power; and men were still at sea, without guide or compass for their future course, which lay among too many quicksands not to make it both doubtful and dangerous.

It is in such times that the general spectator of human nature, as well as the politician, finds peculiar play for observation. The faces of expectants presented every where that absorbed, hesitating, and anxious aspect, which characterizes a state of uncertainty and suspense. It was like the dreadful moment previous to the first onset of battle, in which all but men of true fortitude cower at the approaching danger. No one seemed decided; every thing was balanced; all were afraid to move, for fear of moving wrong. There was a silence, which was any thing but a calm; it was the silence that precedes thunder.

De Vere, to whom all this was new, was peculiarly struck with it. He observed upon it to Eustace, who, however, was remarkably close, and did not now, as he had been wont, engage freely with him in political discussion. He applied also to Clayton, who, from Parliament having met, where he still held his seat, was likely to know what was going on. But he only shook his head, as if uneasy; though he also shrugged his shoulders, as if ignorant. Lord Mowbray, too, gave evident signs that things were not right: and the meetings between him and Lord Cleveland, though frequent, did not seem to end with their usual complacency.

After one of his returns, indeed, from the palace, on which occasion Lord Cleveland appeared peculiarly dark, and even agitated (a thing unusual with him,) it was observed that there was an obvious change in Lord

Mowbray towards him, although the magnet of the drawing-room still drew him to Mowbray House as much as ever.

A change of company, too, was seen there; for the invitations of its beautiful mistress were not confined, as at first they had been, to the particular friends of Lords Cleveland and Oldcastle. Nay, to the surprise of both, they not unfrequently met in the saloon of Lady Constance, not merely Mr. Wentworth's friends, but Mr. Wentworth himself.

In truth, this was a great joy to De Vere, to whom this minister, from sincere esteem, if not from other causes, seemed to pay particular attention, which did not escape the notice of his uncle, and still less of his satellite, Clayton. What De Vere liked almost as much, was to see the gay welcome which Lord Oldcastle, who was of a smooth, open front, always gave to his colleague at these meetings; though the latter, who was of a more marked and decided countenance, did not unbend in an equal degree. "It is impossible, however," said De Vere, "that with such a felicitous and unconstrained manner, Lord Oldcastle can ever personally seek the downfal of his brother minister."

In his uncertainties, not able to gather more from any body than that all was uncertain, and that nobody knew who were together, still less who was to form the expected new government, he resolved to seek out his old experienced acquaintance, Sir William Flowerdale, who, it may be remembered, had given him much help towards forming a proper estimate of official character and political consequence.

De Vere found the Baronet as kindly disposed as ever; though he approached the subject with evident caution, and at first with unwillingness.

"The time is perilous," said the sage, "to all office-men, and particularly to little office-men. I am not, therefore, surprised at Lord Eustace or Mr. Clayton being afraid to commit themselves."

"I wanted no committal," replied De Vere, "I asked only news."

"To hazard news," returned the Nestor, "is sometimes to express an opinion, or at least a bias, which is

the same thing; and there is no saying to what severity of punishment such indications may be exposed, if what is hazarded turns out not to be right. There are times when a smile is dangerous; and a visit, or a walk, arm-in-arm, though the most distant from political intimacy, nay, the most chance thing in the world may be absolute destruction."

"This is astonishing," cried De Vere; "and I therefore despair of information, which, I see, I ought not to ask."

"You are pretty safe," returned Sir William, "as to information, for I am really ignoramus."

"As to opinion, then?"

"That I have no right to form."

"But you do form it; and are qualified to do so."

"What would you ask me?" said the Baronet, gravely.

"Only the little fact," returned De Vere, laughingly, "whether, and when, the Premier will resign, and who is to succeed him?"

"A little fact, indeed," replied Flowerdale; "all the world, however, say Lord Cleveland."

"And is all the world right?"

The man of experience became graver and graver, and at last observed—

> "Periculosæ plenum opus aleæ
> Tractas."

Won, afterwards, by De Vere's manner, esteeming his character and interested for his success, he at last lent himself to his wish, in discussing the question without constraint: in the course of which discussion, his young friend was astonished to learn that the notion of Lord Cleveland's succession had lately lost ground; that, from the discovery of certain private vices, his favour had even declined; and that, at any rate, he had been told that if in the ministry at all, he must resign all pretensions to be Premier.

"He will never be any other," said De Vere.

"So, from his character, I should suppose," answered Flowerdale. "Still, however, Lord Cleveland

has immense power and connexions; and the consequent struggle, should the minister now resign, will convulse the government, and make many a change in private friendships."

"And yet, how firm and knit together they once seemed, and how all-commanding the present minister," said De Vere; "one would suppose that his great character and services would still enable him to influence events."

"He has not a friend in the world," observed Flowerdale.

De Vere was thunderstruck.

"Not one," continued Sir William; "with all his power and grandeur of character, the pride and haughtiness of his manner attached nobody to his person. He seemed even indifferent about making a friend; an art in which Mr. Wentworth, almost without an effort, beats him out of the field. Indeed, the Premier seemed always to despise it; for, trusting solely to his known views, his love of glory and integrity, for support, while he obtained *that*, he left others to seek out patrons, and even rewards for services, where they could. He now finds that friends cannot be made by character and glory alone; and, though once the idol of England, that it is possible for even a patrotic minister to have lived too long."

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed De Vere, "that this should be true?"

"Nothing more so, I assure you," replied the Mentor, "and although all men confess the obligations the country is under to him; though there is still a lustre about his name which cannot easily be extinguished; all men are tired of him."

"And yet," said De Vere, "his name is still every where mentioned as if it were sacred."

"Every where in public, I grant you," replied the Mentor, "for we are ashamed not to appear to revere him. But those who are behind the scenes know how all that is. In truth, the greatness he formerly acquired is what he is now living upon. But his glory is eclipsed; he is almost useless from ill health; he can no longer intimidate, or persuade, or in any way manage

a party. The great persons who supported were almost always jealous of him; and, as I have told you, so careless has he been of the art of attaching men to his person, that he has scarcely a follower, much less a friend."

"You explain this much too well," said De Vere, "for I am even shocked to think that this may be the end of—"

"Ambition," said Sir William, finishing the sentence. "Be that as it may, all men, or, at least, all office-men, since Lord Cleveland's disappointment, are speculating upon another successor. You have, no doubt, heard your uncle talk of Mr. Wentworth as most likely to be the person."

"Nay, for once, I can correct *you*," replied De Vere; "for every thing about my uncle proves that he is united in the closest manner with Lord Oldcastle."

Sir William smiled, and looked a mild dissent, but said nothing.

"You do not doubt this!" cried De Vere.

"I ought not, you saying it," answered Flowerdale, "and I suppose, therefore, the reports I have heard are not true. Yet I have seen his name in the lists handed secretly about, of those who will support Mr. Wentworth in the way of party, and of course go out with him in the event that he does not attain his object."

"Lord Mowbray go out!" echoed De Vere.

Flowerdale again smiled.

"This is astonishing every way," continued De Vere. "Lord Oldcastle then is abandoned, and therefore Lord Cleveland!"

"The last does not follow," said Sir William.

"I am more and more bewildered," cried De Vere. "But pray explain."

"Lord Cleveland may act with Mr. Wentworth, you know, as well as Lord Mowbray."

"What! after,—" but here De Vere checked himself: he then asked what had occasioned the rupture between his uncle and Lord Oldcastle, "For which," said he, "I do hope there is, at least, cogent reason."

"Lord Mowbray," observed Flowerdale, "has always been for a strong government, and Mr. Wentworth, and Lord Cleveland are, in his mind, more likely to make one than Lord Oldcastle."

"Oh! flattering unction!" exclaimed De Vere; "and have two little, little months produced all this!"

"Nay!" said the experienced Flowerdale, "we are not to blame without examination. The alliance to which I perceive you allude, was only planned under presumed circumstances; which not being accomplished, all parties are free. Depend upon it, there have been, and will be, many more extravagant coalitions, and many more violent breaches of them, than this, though it seems so strongly to move your indignation."

"I am sorry for it," answered De Vere, thoughtfully. "Yet, to hear them in Parliament, or see them in private, that these two ministers should ever separate!!"

"My good young friend," said Flowerdale calmly, "you have, I see, much to learn. Yet the experienced Swift, at a much more advanced age, was quite as sanguine, and quite as disappointed."

"Your allusion?" said De Vere.

"'Tis here," answered the Baronet, opening a volume which De Vere had found him perusing when he arrived. It was the Inquiry into the behaviour of Queen Anne's last Ministry, and Flowerdale went on. "The crisis of the times had made me consider and compare them with other periods, and I was busy only the minute before you came in with a passage which gave me, I assure you, much food for reflection."

So saying, he read, "There could hardly be a firmer friendship in appearance, that what I observed between those three great men, who were then chiefly trusted. I mean, the Lords Oxford, Bolingbroke, and Harcourt. I remember, in the infancy of their power, being at the table of the first, where they were all met, I could not forbear taking notice of the great affection which they bore to each other; and said, I would venture to prophesy, that however inconstant our Court had hitherto been, their ministry would certainly last, princi-

pally, because I observed they heartily loved one another, and I did not see how their kindness could be disturbed by competition, since each seemed contented with his own district. So that, notwithstanding the old maxim, which pronounceth Court friendships to be of no long duration, *I was confident theirs would last as long as their lives.* But it seems, the inventor of that maxim happened to be a little wiser than I, who lived to see this friendship *first degenerate into indifference and suspicion, and thence corrupt into the greatest animosity and hatred,* contrary to all appearances, and much to the discredit of me and my sagacity."

"All this, however," said Flowerdale, "is a tale of other times, which I have revived, merely to show you what ambition *may* do with the human heart. As to the present state of things, I have told you, that the Premier has found at last, that a minister can live too long. And I wish Mr. Wentworth may not find, notwithstanding the support of your uncle and Lord Cleveland, that it may be possible to reign in men's hearts and wishes, and to command the applause of senates, yet not to command their votes."

"My uncle and Lord Cleveland's support is an enigma which I must unravel ere I sleep," said De Vere; and thanking Flowerdale for his confidence, he took his leave.

CHAPTER VI.

A FRACAS.

Of what kind should this cock come of?

SHAKSPEARE.

FAR from unravelling the enigma, fresh difficulties arose, which excited the spirit of De Vere still more. On leaving the sage of office, he encountered his un-

cle, who having business at the office of the Premier, sent in his name to Mr. Grantley, who, we may remember, had so moved De Vere's pride in a former chapter, and from whom Lord Mowbray expected instant admittance. But to his great annoyance, (as De Vere was with him,) as well as to De Vere's own astonishment, no haste was made to comply with his expectation.

'Tis true, there were people there before him; but the confidant made little effort to dismiss them, or in any way to save a person of Lord Mowbray's rank and situation the trouble of waiting; and as there was no ante-chamber, he was left to consume the time in the common lobby among the messengers.

De Vere was struck with the disrespect, and not a little surprised at the equanimity with which it was borne.

"These people," said Lord Mowbray, "are come to the minister upon some matter of importance. I will take a newspaper, and wait in Mr. Betterton's snug room till I can be received."

So saying, though naturally proud, like a well disciplined orderly, he took up his abode in the closet of a clerk, till it was convenient to see him.

Not so De Vere, who paced the dark and gloomy passages in no very patient mood, wondering how this trial of dependance (for so he thought it) was to end. Now the confidant's door was a-jar, (a dangerous thing for a confidant's door to be,) and we may judge De Vere's astonishment, when he heard his uncle mentioned by name, and in such terms as the following, by Mr. Grantley:

"Oh! never mind him; he is the greatest nuisance on earth, and so I know the minister thinks him: he can easily wait, for he loves his place too well to be affronted."

"He gives you a cursed deal of trouble," observed Grantley's companion.

"More by half than he is worth," replied Grantley himself; "for we feel him a millstone about our necks."

A laugh followed, and the laugh and the speeches

went deep into the heart of De Vere. A thunderbolt could scarcely have astounded him more, and he flung away from the office, without staying to inform or take leave of his uncle, whom he thought of with mingled feelings of pity and disgust.

"Is it possible," said he, "that the Lord of Castle Mowbray is come to this? A feeble, willing slave, not to a minister, but to a satellite; a major-domo, who depends upon his master's breath for existence,—who may be worshipped to-day, or crushed to-morrow; and yet is able to hold a peer of the realm in such vile and degrading dependance. Alas! what is become of the blood of the Mowbrays? what of the father of the high-minded Constance? Ah Talbois! my loved forest retreat, where I have wandered without danger of affront, how much sweeter would be poverty with thee, than all the sweets of office coupled with such dependance!"

With this he wandered into the park, to breathe more freely, meaning to return to his uncle, to inform him of the affront. But when he returned, his uncle was gone. As a dernier resource, he hastened back to Sir William, whose house was at hand, and, informing him of the circumstance, abruptly asked him if his uncle ought not to resign.

"What," said the cautious official, "before he has even complained to the master, of the impertinence of the man?"

Now, perhaps the good Sir William felt as Lord North did in after-times, and did not comprehend the dignity of resigning. He at least thought Lord Mowbray would not do so; and so he told his nephew.

"Yet there have been such things," said De Vere.

"Talked of," answered Sir William, "but the practice is different. Assure yourself, however, that the Premier ought to bear no part of your blame. There is an uprightness about him, which would never let him think of such a conduct, and a greatness which could not stoop to it, if he did. I can answer for it, he would be sore displeased if he knew it. But, at any rate, your uncle does not complain."

"He does not know the insult," cried De Vere.

"My good young friend," replied Sir William, "do not let us be too sure that he would resent it, if he did."

De Vere absolutely stared, and looked almost displeased at his adviser.

"In Ireland," said he, "I have heard that a Lord Lieutenant himself has been called to the field, for even not immediately seeing a nobleman who had waited upon him."

"We cannot," said Flowerdale, smiling, "in this more prudent climate of ours, reason upon the maxims of our warm-hearted neighbours. What I mean is, that Lord Mowbray is too experienced a man of business, to let it be interrupted by the mere flippancy of an inferior person who has forgotten himself."

"But Mr. Grantley, in one sense, is scarcely his inferior, and must speak the mind of his superiors. I shall certainly feel wanting to my uncle, and even to myself, if I do not inform him."

"Shall I tell you honestly," said Flowerdale, "what will happen? He will not thank you."

"What! not for giving him an opportunity of asserting his honour!"

"At present," returned Flowerdale, "he knows not that it is injured; and you will only involve him in a most uneasy dilemma by informing him."

"Why?"

"He must either make the thing personal in the Irish way you talk of, which, I suppose, you do not mean—"

"Certainly not."

"Or insist upon Mr. Grantley's being dismissed, which is, probably, what you do mean."

"It is."

"It is this, then, for which he will not thank you; for a prime-minister's confidant is not so easily removed."

"I would then remove myself," cried De Vere.

"That would be the worst of all," returned Flowerdale. "But it seems you know not how Christian and forgiving we inferior placemen sometimes are; insomuch, that Dryden, as I believe it is, says, 'Poli-

ticians neither love nor hate.' But you have, as I have told you, much to learn."

"It seems so," answered De Vere; "but I must learn much, indeed, before I submit to withhold this affront from the Earl of Mowbray, let him deal with it as he may." Upon this he left the experienced and mild-minded Baronet, and was only deterred from urging his uncle to take instant vengeance on the offensive Grantley, by the new and important events which had by this time occurred.

CHAPTER VII.

SOUNDING.

For 'tis the sport to have the engineer
Hoist with his own petar.

SHAKSPEARE.

MR. GRANTLEY not *being able to see* Lord Mowbray when he called, received, soon afterwards, a visit from Clayton.

It was a visit which Clayton was fond of paying, for they were kindred spirits. The success and influence of Mr. Grantley at head-quarters, had, indeed, become the object of Mr. Clayton's fondest admiration.

Mr. Grantley, however, had not yet sufficiently fathomed the mind and heart of his admirer, to open himself much to him. The confidant of Lord Mowbray was not in too good odour with him; and, as Clayton was known to owe his introduction to the official world entirely to De Vere, the visit was, just at that moment, from political circumstances, not peculiarly agreeable. But Mr. Grantley had seen and observed enough of the *parvenu*, to be above fearing his visit, on account of any very devoted attachment which he might be supposed to owe to his early friend; and a

very few words brought the two gentlemen to a right understanding with one another on this point.

Mr. Clayton, in fact, opened the conference, by lamenting the impracticable, and, as he called it, the moody nature of a man he so much loved as De Vere.

"I have observed it," said Grantley, "and would not have him show this spirit towards the Minister, or in Parliament, for the world."

"To tell you the truth, his uncle fears it as much as *we* do, and it is for this purpose I have waited upon you, by his desire; for the time is come when in honour I ought to vacate the seat which I only hold for Mr. De Vere as rightful possessor—if, indeed, he at present is rightful possessor."

The Minister's minister caught at this speech, and listened with greedy interest to what followed of the reported spirit in the borough; a spirit which (if even the report was correct) he had too much penetration not to perceive had been fostered, if not generated, by Clayton himself: he, however, complimented him upon his ability, as well as commended him for his constancy to what he called his *early friendships*, and agreed with him in being sorry to think, that to vacate under such circumstances might be dangerous. The difficulty, however, was how to dispose De Vere not to come in.

It was to this that Clayton precisely wished to bring the confidant, and then, seeing every thing exactly ripe, he mentioned the thought which Lord Mowbray, he said, had first conceived, to embark De Vere in diplomacy, which might give him all that honourable ambition could covet; and in the mean time, as his uncle said, by sending him abroad, keep him out of harm's way.

Mr. Grantley could not help admiring the exquisite ingenuity of the young politician. He said it was an excellent thought, and that he would lay it before his chief, as soon as he could lay any thing, but that at present he was so great a martyr to his disorder that he could listen to nothing.

Clayton fastened upon this with great interest, and observed, as if, however, by chance or sudden recol-

lection, "This is another point on which Lord Mowbray wishes to consult you. The crisis is, indeed, alarming, and the contest between Mr. Wentworth and Lord Oldcastle tremendously high; I hope, myself, the Minister will not be too eager to resign, till something more certain appear, as to the succession."

"I hope so too," observed the confidant; and these two speeches of the young and the old politician, were by far the most sincere, if not the only sincere ebullitions, that had escaped either of them for the last month.

Still the confidant of Lord Mowbray could not bring the confidant of the Minister up to his point; for Mr. Grantley did not choose to be sounded by a man whose designs he thought at best but equivocal, and for whom he had no particular predilection. He looked with his usual scrutiny into Clayton's smooth face, but found it under a most vacant expression, which conveyed to him no intelligence of the secret motives which yet he was quite sure had actuated him in this critical visit: there was neither openness nor concealment in it—all was negative: perhaps the very best turn of countenance a devoted humble servant or a spy can possess.

Yet Grantley wished to know, if he could, whether the reports of Lord Mowbray's intended junction with Mr. Wentworth were true: he therefore determined to sound in his turn; and reverting to De Vere, observed that he had heard that, among other young men, he had been smitten with the warmest admiration for Mr. Wentworth, and asked whether it was the *family* feeling.

Mr. Clayton perceived what he meant, but was far from intending, on that account, to answer the question. Indeed this able young man seemed already to have made a discovery which one could only have expected from such profound diplomatists as have since promulged it: namely, that language was only given us in order to disguise our thoughts.

In pursuance of this discovery, Mr. Clayton answered the question as to the family feeling towards Mr. Wentworth, that he believed not; as from what he could observe, Lord Mowbray's inclinations were all in favour of Lord Oldcastle.

Now it by no means follows that this was true, because Mr. Clayton said it; and Mr. Grantley was too old a politician to fall into the snare. For though he did not actually conclude that that which Clayton had asserted, was what many mistaken vulgar people would have called a lie; yet he, in his experience, thought it not impossible that it might be a mere demonstration to amuse him.

Giving Clayton credit, therefore, for an insincerity which he thought might have become more experienced years, he resolved to play his own game upon him; and, with a view to discover whereabouts he really was, intimated his astonishment at what Clayton had asserted, as it was known, not only that Mr. Wentworth had personally a much greater following than Lord Oldcastle, but that his favour in the highest quarter had very greatly increased.

Perhaps after this, it will not be credited that Mr. Grantley had that very morning signed a treaty with Lord Oldcastle, and Lord Mowbray another with Mr. Wentworth, by which a strict alliance, offensive and defensive, had been respectively agreed upon against all opponents: for uncertainty, the only real scruple of Mr. Grantley (whose inclinations had always led him to Lord Oldcastle), had given way to a letter of authority from Windsor, which informed him, that the intentions of the creator of ministers had been at last let out, and that there was no doubt of Lord Oldcastle's complete success.

Strange to say, on the other hand, Lord Mowbray had been influenced by a letter from Lord Cleveland, giving precisely the contrary information. But as Lord Mowbray did not so perfectly rely upon his informant, now that he had declined in favour, his lordship had grown uneasy, and hence the visit of the *parvenu*.

The answer of Clayton, upon this assurance of the great confidant, now gave the latter all the advantage he wished in this race of dissimulation. "For," said Clayton, "upon the whole I rejoice, since there is no doubt of Mr. Wentworth's superior talents and popularity; and it will be up-hill work to have him in op-

position." He added, "That Lord Mowbray *was by no means committed* to Lord Oldcastle, if, indeed, he had not allowed Mr. De Vere's predilections to commit him to Mr. Wentworth; that, at any rate, he would sacrifice personal inclination (if it could be called inclination) to the advantage of his country, and of course would not think of withdrawing his support:" by which last phrase, it was most improperly understood by some very ill-informed and impertinent people, that Lord Mowbray meant to stay in his place—if he could.

Mr. Grantley perceived at once where he was, and, too adroit to push him farther, allowed him to take his leave in the full joy of being able to tell his patron that their speculation was right; while Mr. Grantley himself immediately sought out Lord Oldcastle to inform him of his discovery.

On the return of Clayton to his chief, a summons was sent by Lord Mowbray to a number of his and Mr. Wentworth's friends, as well as others, to meet at Mowbray House, which had become, as we have seen, the focus of party politics.

Here his lordship was most peculiarly active in proposing and cementing a strong coalition to stand by one another in support of Mr. Wentworth's views, whatever they might be.

Mr. Wentworth himself was there, and the sun in Persia scarcely ever rose with greater splendour, in the opinion of his worshippers.

De Vere was not present, but no doubt was entertained of his sentiments, as he dined the next day with Mr. Wentworth at one of his private dinners.

CHAPTER VIII.

POSTHUMOUS FAME.

> And—when I am forgotten, as I shall be,
> And sleep in dull cold marble, where no mention
> Of me must be heard.
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

DE VERE'S acquaintance with Mr. Wentworth arose out of the introduction of their mutual friend Dr. Herbert.

Mr. Wentworth had been made acquainted with all the oppressions, and all the self-exertions, of the moated house; and, ardent himself, and still perhaps with some pent up romance in his composition, which all the struggles and events of his life could not absolutely conquer, he conceived both liking and esteem for his young friend.

On the other hand, De Vere saw in Mr. Wentworth, much, if not every thing he admired. He thought him, as in times a little farther off, another considerable minister was thought, by one who well knew how to describe him, "a person of as much virtue as can possibly consist with a love of power; and his love of power no greater than what is common to men of his superior capacities." He admired and loved him, too, for many other qualities.

But it is not easy to describe this able and accomplished person. His mind was an assemblage of all that could excite, and all that could soothe; his heart, the seat of an ambition, belonging, as it were, to himself; equally above stooping to court or people, and which no fear of either could affright.

With all this, his feelings were attuned to friendship, and his intellect to the pleasures of elegant cultivation. Thus he shone alike in the tumult of party, and the witchery of letters. In these last, he had been beautifully distinguished, and had had many amiable associates, before he acquired his political eminence.

In the senate, his eloquence was like a mountain river, taking its rise from reason, but swelling its impetus by a thousand auxiliary streams of wit and imagination, which it gathered on its way. It is, indeed, difficult to say whether his wit or his reasoning predominated; for such was the effect of both united, that never was reason so set off by wit, or wit so sustained by reason. The one was a running fire, flashing from right to left over the whole field of argument, so as to embarrass and paralyze his antagonists; while the other, when seriousness was resumed, struck down every thing that opposed, with the force of thunder.

But he had a more powerful recommendation still to the favour of his auditors, whether in the senate or elsewhere. His politics, as his heart, were truly, I might say insularly, British; and though he contemplated and understood the Continent, as well as any, and better than most who went before him, of the Continent it was his principle to steer clear, except in so far as it was connected with Britain. This did not fail to "buy him golden opinions with all sorts of persons;" and he wound up all by a staunch adherence to his personal friends, not one of whom he had ever been known to fail, or to abandon. This made him the most loved for his own sake, of all the leaders of his time *out* of the House, while in it he reigned without struggle or compeer,—*nihil simile aut secundum.*

Yet, superior as Mr. Wentworth was in all these respects, he was kept, strange to say, from rising to the highest point, by the influence or intrigues of far less gifted rivals. Men wondered at this, but (happily for the repose of mankind) the times are over when a man who could not rule by other means, did not scruple, if he could, to seize the government by force, and awe even his prince into dangerous compliances.

Mr. Wentworth knew this, but, even in other times, would never have attempted to go so far, and he therefore contented himself at present with a second place.

This, at the time we write of, was the less irksome, because the high quality and worth, and still more,

the long habit of being considered the leader of his party, which belonged to the Premier, induced the submission of all to his authority, without a murmur.

Every body, however, foresaw, from what has been stated, that the Premier's resignation would occasion a contest for the succession, which might shake the administration to its centre; and Mr. Wentworth was not a man to submit to hold a second rank under any other living person.

Such, then, was the public character of this accomplished man; and there were not wanting those who observed, in his connection with great families, in the spread of himself among all men of parliamentary power, and particularly in the attachment of the young men of rising talents to his person, a promise of future strength which might one day influence the fate of the empire.

Mr. Wentworth's public dinners were frequent and thronged, and in them he displayed all the felicity of his wit, and all the conciliation of his manner. But the delight of his secret heart was in banquets far more select, and far more happy. These were his private parties, with men who were either independent of politics, or with whom politics did not form the first passion of their minds; men who were of kindred with himself in every thing that could charm the taste, or enlighten the understanding. With these, he continued still occasionally to live, although often separated from them by that which separates all who are linked in the same pursuit—the struggles of ambition, and the tumults of party.

At these private entertainments De Vere had now the good fortune sometimes to be a guest, particularly when Herbert was in town, and gave him the meeting; for Mr. Wentworth, though much older, was young enough to have received, in common with De Vere, the benefit of Herbetr's able superintendance.

Of these parties, too, was often Sir George Deloraine —the delight of his friends, and indeed, of all elegant society; eminent in the polite arts, and skilled in polite literature; with a power of communicating himself *which was* absolutely charming, when he got over the

only drawback to his powers (if it was a drawback)—a modesty amounting sometimes to shyness. This amiable man always set off the fine polish of his mind, by mingling something of a sentimental cast with all his tastes. He indeed held, that to connect itself with sentiment, was always a great ingredient in the composition of taste itself.

It happened that Sir George was a frequent visitor of Westminster Abbey, on which he had been so rallied by his friends, that he generally endeavoured (from the shyness above-mentioned) to enjoy it by stealth, and often tried to make his entry and exit by some private way. Unfortunately he had been detected by Wentworth in coming out of the door by Poet's Corner, on the very day of one of those dinners, when De Vere was a guest; and, as we may suppose, was shown up immediately by the unmerciful Minister, who put him upon the defence of his *Cockney* tastes, as he called them, with a raillery that was equally keen and protracted.

The enthusiastic Sir George defended himself stoutly; which was precisely what his companions wanted; as his feelings never shone out so much, as when an attack had forced him from his natural reserve. In the course of his defence, after making every one feel the warmth with which he described the contemplation of those rich monuments of departed genius, addressing himself to Wentworth, he added, "It would do all you men of power good, if you were to visit them too; for it would show you how little more than upon a level, is often the reputation of the greatest statesman, with the fame of those, who, by their genius, their philosophy, or love of letters, improve and gladden life even after they are gone.

The whole company saw the force of this remark, and Wentworth not the least among them.

"You have touched a theme," said he, "which has often engaged me, and others before me, with the keenest interest. I know nothing so calculated as this very reflection, to cure us poor political slaves, (especially when we feel the tugs we are obliged to sustain,) of being dazzled by meteors."

"Meteors! do you call them?" said Dr. Herbert. "Men do not run after meteors with such rapid and persevering steps, as you great people pursue ambition."

"I grant you," returned his friend; "and if we did not *think* them something better, who would give himself up to such labour, such invasions of their privacy and leisure, as we are forced to undergo?"

"What is it then that so seduces you?"

"A little intoxication," returned Mr. Wentworth, (laughing off a subject which he did not wish carried too far;) "for which you philosophers say we ought to be whipped; and for which, whipped we often are. Those, however, who want this whipping would do well to take Sir George's advice, and visit the shrines of the mighty dead. They would see how inferior most of themselves are in present estimation to beings who, when alive, could not, in splendour at least, compare with them. I have too often made the reflection, and was not the happier for it."

"You cannot be serious," said the Divine, "since who are such real benefactors to mankind, as enlightened legislators and patriot warriors? What poet, I had almost said, what philosopher, can stand in competition with the founder or defender of his country?"

"Ask your own Homer, your own Shakspeare," answered Wentworth; forgetting his ambition for a moment in his love of letters.

"You take me in my weak part," said Herbert, "and the subject would carry us too far. I would remark, however, that but for the Solons, the Romuluses, the Charlemagnes, and Alfreds, we should have no Homer or Shakspeare to charm us."

"I know this is your favourite theme," said the Minister; "and you know how much I agree with you. But this is not precisely the question raised by Sir George; which is, the *superiority* in the temple of Fame, enjoyed by men distinguished for their efforts in song or history, (but who might have been mere beggars when alive,) over those who flaunted it superciliously over them in a pomp and pride, which are now *absolutely forgotten.*"

"I will have nothing to do with supercilious flaunters," replied Herbert; "I speak of the liberal, the patriotic, who seek power for the true uses of power, in order to diffuse blessing and protection all around them. These can never fail to be deservedly applauded; and I honour such ambition, as of infinitely more real consequence to the world, than those whose works (however I may love them in private) can, from the mere nature of things, be comparatively known only to a few."

"All that is most true," said Mr. Wentworth; "and for a while, public men of the description you mention, fill a larger space in the eye of mankind; that is, of contemporary mankind. But extinguish their power, no matter by what means; whether by losing favour at Court, or being turned out by the country, to both which they are alike subject; let death forcibly remove them, or a queen die, and their light, like Bolingbroke's, goes out of itself; their influence is certainly gone, and where is even their reputation? It may glimmer for a minute, like the dying flame of a taper, after which they soon cease to be mentioned, perhaps even remembered."

"Surely," said the Doctor, "this is too much in extremes."

"And yet," continued Wentworth, "have we not all heard of a maxim, appalling to all lovers of political fame———'that nobody is missed?' Alas! then are we not compelled to burst out with the poet:—

> 'What boots it with incessant care,
> To tend the homely, slighted shepherd's trade!
> And strictly meditate the thankless muse?
> Were it not better done, as others use,
> To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
> Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?' "

Both Sir George and De Vere kindled at this; and the Doctor himself smiled, when the Minister proceeded.

"In short," said he, "when a statesman or even a conqueror is departed, it depends upon the happier poet *or philosophic* historian, to make even his name

known to posterity; while the historian or poet acquires immortality for himself, in conferring upon his heroes an inferior existence."

"Inferior existence!" exclaimed Herbert.

"Yes! for look at Plutarch, and ask which are most esteemed, himself, or those he records? Look at the old Claudii, and Manlii of Livy; or the characters in Tacitus; or Mecænas, Agrippa, or Augustus himself—princes, emperors, ministers, esteemed by contemporaries as gods!! Fancy their splendour in the eye of the multitude, while the multitude followed them! Look at them now! Spite even of their beautiful historians, we have often difficulty in rummaging out their old names; while those who wrote or sang of them, live before our eyes. The benefits they conferred passed in a minute, while the compositions that record them last for ever."

Mr. Wentworth's energy moved his hearers, and even Herbert, who was too classical not to be shaken by these arguments.

"Still, however," said the latter, "we admire, and even wish to emulate Camillus, and Miltiades, and Alexander; a Sully and a Clarendon."

"Add a Lord Burleigh," replied the Minister, "who, in reference to Spenser, thought an hundred pounds an immense sum for a song! Which is now most thought of, or most loved? the calculating minister or the poor poet? the puissant treasurer, or he who was left 'in suing long to bide?'"

Sir George and De Vere, considering the quarter whence it came, were delighted with this question. The Doctor was silent, and seemed to wish his great friend to go on.—He proceeded thus:—

"I might make the same question as to Horace and Mecænas; and yet, I dare say, Horace was as proud of being taken in Mecænas's coach to the Capitol, as the Dean of St. Patrick's in Oxford's or Bolingbroke's, to Windsor. Yet, Oxford is even now chiefly remembered through that very Dean, and so, perhaps, would Bolingbroke, but that he is an author, and a very considerable one, himself. We may recollect," continued *he, "the manner* in which Whitelocke mentions Mil-

ton—that '*one* Milton, a blind man,' was made secretary to Cromwell. Whitelocke was then the first subject in the state, and lived in all the pomp of the seals, and all the splendour of Bulstrode; while the blind man waked at early morn, to listen to the lark bidding him good morrow at his cottage window. Where is the Lord Keeper now?—where the blind man? What is known of Addison as Secretary of State? and how can his Excellency compare with the man who charms us so exquisitely in his writings? When I have visited his interesting house at Bilton,* sat in his very study, and read his very books, no words can describe my emotions. I breathe his official atmosphere here, but without thinking of him at all. In short, there is this delightful superiority in literary over political fame, that the one, to say the best of it, stalks in cold grandeur upon stilts like a French tragedy actor, while the other winds itself into our warm hearts, and is hugged there with all the affection of a friend, and all the admiration of a lover."

"Hear! hear!" cried Sir George; which was echoed by De Vere, and Herbert himself.

"This is very good," said Herbert, looking at him with great keenness in his small black eyes; "and we are to understand, therefore, that you would have been happier in the pursuit of letters and philosophy than of power. You would no doubt prefer, like Waller,

> "All on the margin of some flowery stream,
> To spread your careless limbs;"

rather than like Shakspeare, in a storm,

> "To look abroad from some high cliff, superior,
> And enjoy the elemental war."

"I know not," said Wentworth, "but among friends I may say, that though I have pursued, and as some think, obtained power, I have not been the happier for it."

All were struck with the emphasis which he laid upon the words, "*as some think*," and each looked

* In Warwickshire.

at the other with a significance which seemed to say, more was meant than meets the ear. He perceived it, and in rather a hurried manner returned to the subject.

"With regard to myself," said he, "I repeat, among friends, that the glare we all live in, is not what I should say, was real happiness; though, like drunkards, few can quit their acquired taste. I trust, however, I could return to the shade at an hour's warning, and find a repose far from the gaze of men, more gratifying than in buffeting and being buffeted as we are, although victory be the consequence."

At these words, spite of himself, he fell again into a sort of reverie.

"Well," said Herbert, resuming, "all this is very fine, and we are bound to believe, that you at least believe yourself. Nay! I have no doubt," added he, (the smile increasing almost into a laugh,) "we shall soon see you among your orange trees at Wimbledon."

"Sooner, perhaps, than you are aware of," replied the Minister, continuing his serious mood. "But whether sooner or later," (here he rather forced cheerfulness,) "my orange trees are always too delightful not to be welcomed with gladness. If I *am* sent to them, I assure you, I shall snuff their blossoms with not the less pleasure, because delivered from some knaves and many fools; or even from the task of reading the beautiful effusions of office, instead of those of the *mens divinior*, which delight you, Doctor, in the sacred retirement of your cloister."

"So you will no doubt think to-night," replied the Dean, "after you dismiss us, and pass the half of it, perhaps, in composing those very effusions of office. Forgive me, if you remind me of what the great critic of life says of his usurer:—

> "Hæc ubi locutus fœnerator Alfius,
> Jamjam futurus rusticus,
> Omnem relegit Idibus pecuniam;
> Quærit Kalendis ponere."*

* The usurer Alfius, full of dreams of a country life, as soon as he had ended this rhapsody, called in all the money he had at interest, in order immediately—to put it out again.

Mr. Wentworth took his raillery in good part, and the entrance of coffee changed the conversation.

The effects of this little discussion were not unimportant on the mind of De Vere. The sentiments of Mr. Wentworth were congenial with his own, and pleased all his favourite predilections. He pictured him in retreat from power, either after being fatigued and weighed down with labour, which a love of country, as well as taste, had induced him to undergo; or towering in real *contemptu mundi*, above the intrigues and envy of rivals, though they might succeed in displacing him. "It is then," said De Vere, "notwithstanding his political fire, it is then he will shine most. It will be beautiful, if ever it happen, to see the manner in which he will make the philososher rise above the statesman, and, in a refined retreat, to observe how he will enjoy the "solicitæ jucunda oblivia vitæ."

Was De Vere right in his speculation?

CHAPTER IX.

A RETIRING MINISTER.

> But yesterday the word of Cæsar might
> Have stood against the world;—now he lies there,
> And none so poor to do him reverence.
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

THOSE who are acquainted with the nature of ambition, may be able to answer the question with which we concluded the last chapter. To those who are not, it may appear strange, that in the very moment of uttering the sentiments, which De Vere thought so beautiful, Mr. Wentworth, in his public capacity, was plunged in excitements and difficulties of the most harassing kind. The Premier, more ill in mind than in body, and moody from disgust, could do nothing if he would, and scarcely would if he could; so much had he

himself been thwarted in all his projected arrangements. In fact, at the close of an illustrious life, in which almost every hour had been one of applause, he had the misery, as has been hinted, to see himself neglected in his decline, and his friends dropping off one by one,

"Gone to salute the rising morn."

He was not too much attended to at Court where he had never been a courtier; and not too much remembered by the country, which, though saved by his services, cared little for him now he was no longer wanted. Oh! how much better, he thought, to have died ere this had happened!

The hardness of his political opponents who lowered in embattled watch over his hoped-for removal, he could have borne; but the indifference of followers, however coldly he had treated them, now touched his heart. He ruminated too late on the instability of the world, which, if he recovered, he resolved to abandon for ever; and to this resolve, the world, now they had no farther use for him, were extremely indifferent. Nothing, therefore, was heard but the incessant roll of carriages thronging to the doors of expected successors, and people read of their different merits and pretensions in daily publications, which raged with all the violence of party.

In this situation, a man, (one of the very few who remained attached to the Premier,) of a bold sarcastic turn, who expected nothing by a change, and who was high enough in office to take the liberty, replied to the numerous inquiries that were one day made concerning the Minister, that he was infinitely better, that he meant not to resign, and would certainly attend the council in two days more. The impression made on the different inquirers, whom he thus fooled, gave ample food to his disposition to ridicule; and the Court, the Treasury, and both Houses of Parliament, were filled for some hours with the most ludicrous exemplifications of the hopes and fears of candidates, and the friends of candidates.

Of this, De Vere was a near and observing witness, and it did not raise his brother politicians in his estimation; while the contemplation of the abandonment (if nothing worse) in which this once great Minister was suffered to sink from power, sickened his heart, and at least did not increase his respect for party ambition.

While his feelings were much excited by this, he met and joined his altered friend Lord Eustace, who seemed hurried, and big with expectation of impending events. De Vere was big with them too; but he could not help thinking even more of the past, in regard to the great man about to retire from the scene, than the future, where younger energies were ready to push him from his stool.

He expressed this feeling to Eustace, expecting him to echo it; but Eustace, who had for some time been much estranged from him, avoided the subject; observing, however, frankly enough, that he was too much plunged in present interests, to think of those that were gone by. He was full of the expected crisis; of a change among the men in power; which is always, in England, enough to stifle at least one half of the considerations which lead to it, and whilst the excitement lasts, diminishes the most natural sympathies, and extinguishes even the appearance of sentiment.

To De Vere's lamentation, therefore, he rather coldly replied, "your hero *has* been a great man, but he has outlived himself, and forgotten his own Horace,

"Solve senescentem, mature sanus equum?"

"In truth," added Eustace, "he ought not to have quitted retreat, where his greatness would have always been sacred, and his reputation unalloyed."

"The force of recollection, however," replied De Vere, "*will* burst forth, spite of all minor spots, which, like the spots in the sun, are lost in its radiance."

"True," said Eustace, "but the radiance now no longer shines, and recollections will not revive it."

"And, therefore, as most commodious, we bury them both in the same grave," returned De Vere.

"My dear Sir," said Eustace, who was quickening his pace towards Downing Street, "let us think of settling the new Minister first, and it will then be time enough to show gratitude to the old one."

De Vere immediately slackened his steps, and allowed his former friend to leave him; wondering, and not pleased with the sentiment which had escaped him. Flowerdale, whom he saw immediately afterwards, told him it was the most natural thing in the world.

"He is ardent as to the present," said De Vere, "but I could not have thought him so cold to the past."

"And yet you would have shown the same ardour," observed Flowerdale, "had the question been about a mistress."

"A mistress!" exclaimed De Vere, overset with surprise; then colouring deeply, asked what he meant?

"I only wish," replied Flowerdale, "to explain one excitement by another. Party is Lord Eustace's mistress—"

"And it must be owned," returned De Vere, recovering, "he pursues her with a devotion, which I suppose must succeed."

"He moved the address admirably," said Flowerdale.

"Which seems to have spoiled him," answered De Vere, "for it has apparently extinguished his better feelings."

"He is full of the hope of power," said Flowerdale, "and has not time for feeling."

"His hope is too high not to be cast down," answered De Vere. "The cabinet would scarcely content him now, especially as there will be so many vacancies."

"And are you too, quiescent?"

"Not quite; but I own I think as much of the star that is setting, as that, whichever it is, that is to rise. When I now hear of the Minister, and of the heartless indifference of those who once 'spaniel'd him at heels';

nay, of the nation whom he once ruled in such gorgeous triumph, I am filled with mournful reflections. Who now

> "Sues, and kneels, and says God save him?
> Where be the bending peers that flatter'd him?
> Where be the thronging troops that follow'd him?"

Even though Eustace were himself to succeed him, I think he might have stopped awhile, and thought of him with other feelings."

Flowerdale respected these sentiments, but observed, "on the field of battle one can seldom stop even to pity, much less to succour one's best friend; though after the fight is over we may be deluged in grief for him."

"That is true," said De Vere gravely; "and how will it all turn out?"

"Shall I tell you?" answered Flowerdale. "If Lord Oldcastle succeed, there will be all the decencies of high respect for the late Premier; national gratitude will be enlarged upon, and a wish to follow his his steps expressed, *et cætera, et cætera.*

"How if he fail?"

"The veneration will be swelled to adoration; orations worthy Pericles will raise him to immortality; we shall hear of nothing but the

> 'Clarum et venerabile nomen;'

and his fame will be lauded beyond all power of imitation."

"And why this difference?" asked De Vere.

"To draw the stronger contrast to the disdvantage of the successor."

"What! if the successor be Mr. Wentworth? He whom all men unite in elevating almost to a level with the Premier himself?"

"Before he has been installed a month," replied Flowerdale, "a week, nay, perhaps a day, there will be a cry of

> 'Dignum imperio nisi imperasset.'

"It is extraordinary in the strivings of party, what hypothetical wonders are attributed to a man before he is in power; how depreciated the very moment after he is invested with it."

"But Mr. Wentworth is tried."

"As second, I grant you," answered Flowerdale; "but he has never been chief. It is astonishing what difference in merit this little circumstance will often create. For myself, I agree with you that whether as first or second, there is no man to compare with him, and so think those who will oppose him. Those who oppose the Premier now, speak their real sentiments of him. Let him be Premier, and the *expression* of the opinion at least will be stifled. A thousand insects will be let loose to buz, sting, and torment, if they cannot destroy him."

"I have observed this in regard to others, said De Vere; "but here, in wit, in eloquence, in literary powers, his superiority is so uncontested, I may say so incontestable, that——"

"I say again," interrupted Flowerdale, "he has not been First. Wait only till then, and judge."

"And what will be the consequence?" continued De Vere.

"Why, as they cannot cope with him in battle royal, they will teaze him with light troops in guerilla warfare. They will quiz and call names."

"Quiz!" cried De Vere, "ridiculous!"

"Nothing is ridiculous that tells in a system. But quizzing is in itself a more powerful weapon than you seem aware of. There have been instances of even a strong administration torn all to pieces by this little instrument. A minister, like a trout, has sometimes been tickled to death."

"How delightful," said De Vere, laughing, "and perhaps as a reward for an honest ambition."

"Exactly so."

"But one cannot tickle a pike; and I see not still how they can assail our friend."

"I have said he cannot be assailed in regular combat," answered Flowerdale. "He is, personally, too *powerful* to meddle with; but scurrility may be let

loose, and affected contempt thrown upon his most dazzling talents."

"One shake of the lion's mane will put down all this," said De Vere.

"I agree, and am glad you are not so sensitive as I thought," replied the Baronet. "You will in time, I dare say, be able to brave party virulence, and laugh at opposition as you would at a gnat."

"All this, however," continued De Vere, "does not raise my veneration for party politics, or even for national gratitude; and it is inconceivable to me, that after a life of, surely, as much integrity, ability, and glory, as ever adorned a favourite of history, the desertion of the great man now retiring, should be so mournfully complete."

"The expression you have used of party politics, explains it all," said Flowerdale. "In this country, ministerial power, whoever is the possessor, is a constitutional sin; and while it is held, will be punished as such. Where the question of a military or naval hero (not a politician) you would not have to complain. As it is, when the resignation takes place,

'Extinctus amabitur idem,'

and whenever Lord —— dies, the national gratitude will no doubt pour itself out in the most splendid public funeral. But, in the mean time, what would you say, if he whose closing power you so lament, and whom you justly call the favourite of history, is already styled an impostor and its mountebank."

De Vere started; but said it must be some piece of insolence of the kennel.

"Not so, I assure you," replied the Baronet, "the person who has presumed to this insolence, has long reigned among the wits of the time, and while he effects republicanism, is the quintessence of quality, and the Prince of Aristocrats. Nay, he is the son of a great Prime Minister himself an old Senator, and owes all his fortune to places and pensions; which he very quietly pockets, while he rails by the hour, at placemen and pensioners, and writes and talks of nothing

but the insincerity of courtiers, and the oppression of Kings."

De Vere, though he had already almost done wondering at the world, observed that this gentleman must be a nondescript.

"He is certainly no ordinary character," replied Flowerdale, "and possesses, in addition to many other requisites, no ordinary stock of assurance. However you may judge for yourself." He then named to his inquiring friend, a gentleman eminent for the possession of talents and literature, which, however, he allowed to evaporate in dowager gossip, though he contrived to make it the most agreeable thing in the world, and hence was infinitely the fashion. Every thing he said or wrote was pointed with wit, generally of a caustic kind. He went infinitely beyond De la Rochefoucauld; and was a puissant example of the

"Nul n'aura de l'esprit
Hors nous et nos amis."

His "amis," however were very few; since few in the world, whether statesmen or heroes, and still less men of piety or learning, were good enough for him. He therefore had lately taken it into his head to quit Parliament, and, as he said, party, and even the world itself, for all which he had grown too fastidious, though he was restless while not blazing in the midst of them.

Thus he amused himself, with assuming the airs of a Democritus, by laughing, though he preferred throwing dirt at every body of any character, seemingly for no other reason than that they possessed it."

"And was he not sometimes right, by chance?" asked De Vere.

"Of course," said Flowerdale: "but you shall judge for yourself, for I have been allowed to copy an extract from a letter of his, to one of his friends, a man of noble name, which is now the talk of the town. But prepare for a trial; for it will not add to your good-humour with public men."

"*I will* run the risk," said De Vere.

Sir William then unlocked a drawer, and placed a little manuscript in De Vere's hands, which the latter perused as follows:—

"I must tell you, I desire to die when I have nobody left to laugh with me. I have never seen or heard any thing serious, that was not ridiculous. Jesuits, methodists, philosophers, politicians, the hypocrite Rousseau, the scoffer Voltaire, the encyclopedists, the Humes, the L——s, the G——s, the atheist tyrant of Prussia, and the Mountebank of History, Mr. P——, all are to me but impostors, in their various ways. Fame or interest are their objects; and, after all their parade, I think a ploughman, who sows, reads his almanack, and believes the stars but so many farthing candles, created to prevent his falling into a ditch as he goes home at night, a wiser and more rational being, and I am sure an honester, than any of them. Oh! I am sick of visions and systems, that move one another aside, and come over again, like the figures in a moving picture. Rabelais brightens up to me, as I see more of the world; he treated it as it deserved, laughed at it all, and, as I judge from myself, ceased to hate it: for I find hatred an unjust preference."

"Your opinion," said Sir William, seeing De Vere in a fit of seriousness when he had finished.

"That if half this picture is not distorted, I am not so happy as the painter:—I cannot laugh at my species."

"I agree," returned the Baronet; "at the same time you will own he has assembled a great deal of good company on the same canvass."

"I cannot thank him for it," observed De Vere, "even if he is just; if unjust, he himself deserves to be hated, or at least to be classed among those he so hates, despises, and laughs at. I can neither respect nor believe a man, who tells me he never knew any thing serious that was not ridiculous. I will not say who is the mountebank of history, but I think it pretty clear, who is the mountebank of philosophy. At the same time, I own this cold-blooded ingratitude troubles me, and goes farther to cure me of even patriotic am-

bition, than any thing I have yet seen. Eustace was moderation itself to it. He was only selfish, this man both selfish and malignant.

"All this is but too true," said Flowerdale.

"Then the less we discuss it the better," cried De Vere with emphasis; "I have got but little comfort from you to-day;" and he took his leave.

CHAPTER X.

HALF-FACED FELLOWSHIP.

For mine own part, my lord, I could be well contented to be there, in respect to the love I bear your house. The purpose you undertake is dangerous; the friends you have named, uncertain.

SHAKSPEARE.

If De Vere gained little comfort from the shrewd observer of the public drama that was going forward, the practical Sir William, he certainly did not improve his lot by mingling among the actors themselves. Yet he had points affecting his own fortune to carry. He was anxious to settle the question of the seat, as well as his views to office, which, though considerably weakened from passing scenes, were not relinquished. He spoke of both objects to Clayton, who gave him most loyal assurances, but referred him, as in duty bound, to his uncle.

He spoke of them to Lord Mowbray, but he found that noble person in far too great an agitation about himself to attend to such minor considerations; and when De Vere pressed the seat, with a view to support Mr. Wentworth, the effect upon the nerves and courage of his uncle was such as to deter one who was not too eager about it from pursuing it, at least for a time. Yet, considering what he had learned from Flowerdale, of Lord Mowbray's sacrifice of Lord Oldcastle, in order *to join Wentworth* and Cleveland, and the active share

he had afterwards taken in promoting the coalition of their party, by assembling them at Mowbray House, he was struck with no little wonder at the coldness with which every proposal in favour of Wentworth was received.

De Vere, however, was not the only person embarrassed, for the time was such, at least for some days, that no one knew how to act or what to expect. The respective parties of Mr. Wentworth and Lord Oldcastle were indeed so nearly balanced, that they were ready to give battle *à l'outrance,* in the assertion of their respective pretensions. The doors of great officers of state were besieged, and the closet of the highest personage of the realm was frequently opened to various leaders, all professing to be actuated alone by an anxiety for the interests of the empire; which interests, however, could only be consulted by a compliance with the particular views of each leader respectively. The reports, messages, long faces, conferences in ministers' rooms and secretaries' rooms, in the passages of Whitehall, under the trees of the Park, and in the recesses of the House of Commons, were innumerable, and too obvious for concealment; and (believe it who will) it was in the very midst of these agitating plans, that Mr. Wentworth gave the dinner, and held the philosophic conversation, which have been mentioned in a former chapter.

At the time, De Vere, though he knew the reports that were in agitation, did not know the share which the actual conduct of his friend had had in giving them currency. He knew not that he had, on the very morning of his dinner, been closeted with some of his most powerful supporters, who had for a considerable period been constantly urging him even to lay claim to the Premiership, when vacant, as his undoubted right, from the reputation he had obtained and the confidence he had inspired. They had even gone so far as to suggest, and actually to demand, a pledge from him, that, if he obtained the post, he would support and carry into effect various reforms of which, these patriots said, the State stood cruelly in need; and nothing could ap-

pear more zealous than this body of partizans in a cause so virtuous, and likely to be so popular.

Mr. Wentworth, with great enthusiasm of character, and a spirit of as great integrity as the most inflexible patriot could wish, was himself sufficiently inclined to this principle of action. He gave the pledge required, and demanded and received, on his part, the most explicit promises, that should another succeed to the government, and he be obliged to retire, they would all make common cause, and act in party. What was his astonishment, therefore, to find, now the crisis was arrived, that these patriot friends seemed not only to have forgotten their principles, but to have changed their opinion in regard to his own pretensions. At another meeting which was held, they admired him, they said, as much as ever; thought him a great creature; a public possession, who ought to have one of the highest posts in the ministry: but as to engaging in opposition, should he unfortunately be left out of the new administration, they could not join in the attempt to force the closet of the King, who they found was likely to decide in favour of Lord Oldcastle. They only hoped that he might still be allowed to hold his place under that noble person.

No language can describe the disdain of Mr. Wentworth at this change of conduct: it called up all his pride of character, which he felt to be insulted, as well as that his fairest hopes were disappointed. His honourable ambition (for it was honourable) was thwarted, his rival exalted, his schemes for the public good paralyzed; and what wounded him most, (for he was of a most loyal and open disposition, and of a nature the most abhorrent to every species of treachery) all seemed to be the consequence of an intercourse of some standing with the Court, of which these friends had kept him wholly in ignorance. In short, it was only at the moment we speak of, that he learned that the compact which these friends had made with him, had been made while they were under the deception of an expected decision in his favour, in which expectation they were now disappointed; for it appeared certain that Lord Oldcastle would be called upon to name

the new administration; and in that event he had declared against Wentworth's holding any place in it.

Mr. Wentworth was not of a temper, at any time, to disguise his feelings, and he was at no pains to conceal them now; in fact, they escaped him in reproaches so bitter, and at the same time so just, that many of his auditors shrank from his presence. Among these, wonderful as it may appear, was Lord Mowbray himself. None of them dared to brave him; and the few who attempted explanation, but feebly represented their motives, which were founded, they said, upon the necessity—created by a spirit of discontent and rebellion among the people—to support the power, and therefore the choice of the Crown.

Stung by what he considered as downright treachery, the vehemence of Mr. Wentworth's mind now got the better of him, and he could scarcely prevent himself (still the second Minister of the Crown) from going down to the House, and denouncing what he called the intriguing character of the Premier expectant. At that moment he received a letter from his new ally, Lord Cleveland, expressing, after great lamentations of the untoward end of things, his sincere regrets that the hopes of the country had not been fulfilled in his (Mr. Wentworth's) person; but trusting that the circumstances of the times, and the contumacious, ill-affected spirit abroad, would excuse him and the rest of the *King's friends*, if they gave their support to the new government, even though among its members *he* might not be included.

Wentworth's heart swelled with contempt as he read this letter; an expression of superciliousness, mixed with detestation, got possession of his features; and, tearing the letter to pieces, he exclaimed, "Why, what a frosty spirited rogue is this!" like Hotspur's lord fool, "for his own part, he could be well contented to be there, in respect of the love he bears our house: is clear to me that he loves his own barn better than our house."

Out of humour with the world, particularly the political world, against which he sometimes meditated vengeance, sometimes retreat, he hastened home,

avoiding in the way a number of bustling busy characters, especially those who had professed friendship for him and opposition to Lord Oldcastle. Arrived at home he ordered his doors to be closed for some hours which he passed in his closet meditating on the folly and inefficacy of power, or even of fame, to produce happiness; in which meditation he was much assisted by some eloquent sentences of Bolingbroke and Seneca, some of whose volumes always lay on his table, amid dispatches, debates, and party pamphlets.

Let not this picture be undervalued; for so versatile, and so amiable, in reality, was Wentworth's spirit, that, believe it who will, all this had its effect. He despised the base desertion of his party as much as ever; but by degrees he found himself in a sort of proud composure, and, on that very day, as we have said, presided at the dinner where he so delighted his guests with philosophic conversation.

CHAPTER XI.

AN EX-MINISTER.

'Tis certain, Greatness, once fall'n out with fortune,
Must fall out with men too. What the declin'd is,
He shall as soon read in the eyes of others
As feel in his own fall. For men, like butterflies,
Show not their mealy wings but to the summer.

SHAKSPEARE.

MEANTIME the final change had gone on; Lord Oldcastle was declared the first in power in the State; and Mr. Wentworth immediately, as he said he would, went to his orange trees. Their perfume, however, we suppose, he did not find so delightful as he expected, for he very soon came back again. Yet, while there, a friend who called upon him, found his table covered with the letters and memoirs which describe with such intense interest the breaking up of the Tory

ministry of Queen Anne. The dissensions, rivalries, and heart-burnings, the implacable violence which divided former friends, and the final disappointments and ruin of all concerned in that tumultuous and interesting time, seemed to have been the peculiar objects of his study. One passage he had marked, in a letter of Erasmus Lewis, on the fall of Oxford, and the succession of Bolingbroke.

"The runners," said the letter, "are already employed to go to all the coffee-houses. They rail to the pit of hell." He had also copied with his own hand, those verses of Oxford himself, written in the moment of his dismissal, more valuable from denoting the changed views of a fallen statesman, than either for the beauty of the poetry, or, as we hope, the justness of the sentiment. The lines are, indeed, in the very taste and spirit of Sternhold and Hopkins.

"To serve with love,
And shed your blood,
Approved is above;
But here below,
Examples show,
'Tis fatal to be good."

Mr. Wentworth returned sooner than he intended, influenced, though he disguised it, perhaps, from himself, by the language that was held about him, and which justified the account given by Erasmus Lewis of the proceedings of a similar time.

In fact, the town had been industriously filled with reports not to his advantage, and strange to say, not contradicted by those who best knew their want of foundation.

It is the observation of one who lived some time in the atmosphere of Courts, though his account of them is not to be always taken as correct, that "when a great minister has lost his place, immediately virtue, honour, and wit, fly over to his successor with the other ensigns of office."*

In this instance, the maxim was proved; for it was

* Swift to Sterne, 26th September, 1710.

impossible to conceive the numbers that now changed their opinion both of Lord Oldcastle and his rival. The last had a facility, they said, in addressing the House, but was deficient in his office. He was unequal to its forms, and was often penning a sonnet, when he should have been writing a dispatch. Wits had more weight with him, certainly more access to him, than politicians. Lord Oldcastle was the reverse of all this; and, we might depend upon it, things would now be differently and better administered.

Lord Oldcastle at least knew how to profit by this change of temper; and, unless he was much belied, showed a spirit worthy of Olivarez himself. For he employed many a young Gil Blas to feel the pulse of the nation, by decrying in pamphlets the characters and measures, not merely of his late coadjutor, but of the late Premier himself.

Among these useful instruments of misrepresentation, was, (with the full consent of Lord Mowbray,) our illustrious *parvenu*. Nor was Lord Oldcastle ungrateful; for, as proselytes are sometimes more useful, and therefore more valued than friends, (who are merely consistent,) the consequence to Lord Mowbray and his *protegé* was a continuance in their places. This, though bought by the eternal contempt of Mr. Wentworth and many others, was thought not too dearly paid for, while Mr. Wentworth confined his opinions to his own breast, or the expression of them merely to private circles. But this was scarcely to be expected from one not too famous for the control of his feelings, even when not, as in this instance, provoked and lashed by baseness as well as injury, into most honourable indignation. He therefore did not fail to express his opinion of Lord Mowbray in the House, with a keenness and effect which turned the *parvenu* pale. And as to the *parvenu* himself, Wentworth, without scruple or disguise, and pronouncing every thing but his name,—while his eye flashed upon him with a sort of sacred anger,—designated him as "the smooth volunteer of dirty work, for whoever would pay the price of it."

The bitterness, and, to many, the justice of this re-

proach, seemed to electrify the House; and, as the *parvenu* (as has been described) was a man of sentiment, it gave a whole night's misery to his high sensibilities. He recovered, however, when he recollected that, at the Treasury, it might confer upon him the air of a martyr, and consequently a claim to some additional reward.

He was, therefore, only more assiduous than ever in his character of an official go-between; and Lord Mowbray made this affront an argument with the new Minister for bestowing marks of favour on himself, and on his *protegé* a sinecure place which then happened to be vacant.

"It may gild him," said the Minister, (who had a keen view of character, and who looked, as he said it, as if he meant something more than an allusion to Clayton,) "but it will be with tarnished gold."

"Gild him, however," said Lord Mowbray.

All this was cutting to the heart of De Vere. He could not bear what he called the degradation of his uncle and of his friend; if Clayton was still his friend.

"Far from accepting new appointments," said he with some indignation to the latter; "you should have laid down the old one, after the conduct you held in favour of Mr. Wentworth."

Clayton in reply, deeply lamented the miserable state of affairs; wished himself a thousand times out of politics in some calm retreat, and said he had been inhumanly, and unjustly treated by the Ex-minister, whose cause he had always advocated, till he found him really too dangerously ambitious. But, in regard to his keeping or accepting new offices, he pleaded that he really was not his own master, but a mere follower of Lord Mowbray on that point. Nor could he prevent his patron, if he thought his honour concerned, from insisting that his accession to the new arrangement should not be stigmatized, either in his own, or his friend's person, and that therefore a strong demonstration should be made in their favour.

"That," said De Vere, little moved, "would require some high notice of my lord himself."

"You are right," returned Clayton, "and you

therefore cannot be surprised if you find that he has accepted the red ribband."

"Good Heavens!" exclaimed De Vere, with an angry disgust which Clayton never liked; "what is become of the spirit of the ancient Mowbrays! And of what value can honours be to the honourable, if so abused! But these rascally politics—" and he flung away from Clayton in discontent, though to the very great relief of that rising young man. In fact, De Vere from that moment felt an estrangement from him, which advanced in proportion as Clayton seemed to advance in the favour of Fortune.

CHAPTER XII.

PREJUDICE.

I did love you once!—
Indeed, my lord, you made me oft believe so.
SHAKSPEARE.

HOWEVER pure and consistent had been the conduct of De Vere throughout the late tergiversations, neither his conduct, nor his indignation, at what he ignorantly thought the disgrace of his uncle, secured him from undeserved mortification.

On the one hand, he saw in his own family, how soon a political sin (to him of the deepest die) could be salved.

Nobody bowed the less to Lord Mowbray because he had been the first to form, and then to desert, a coalition. He bore his blushing honours unblushingly on his person; nor did any one doubt, or (what is the same thing) show to *him* that he doubted, that they proceeded from the merited favour of his sovereign. His drawing-rooms were still thronged, and their lovely mistress thought more attractive than ever: and as for Mr. Clayton, the castigation which it would have burst De *Vere's heart* to have submitted to, was forgotten;

while in the smile of the world; he saw nothing remembered but that he was more at ease in fortune, and considered every where as one of her most prosperous children. Such difference makes success in the complexion of conduct.

On the other hand, De Vere's own attachment to Mr. Wentworth, for which he had involved himself in differences with his family; leading, perhaps, to disappointments of the tenderest kind, was not at first rewarded; nay, was at first repudiated by Wentworth himself, in a manner to give a severe check to his zeal.

To account for this we are bound to confess, that our friend, the Ex-minister, was cruelly soured by the disappointment and dishonourable conduct to which he had been made the victim.

It was not the loss of expected power, or of an immense patronage, that dwelt with him. What sunk deep into his heart, was the desertion of the great families who had promised to support him; and of followers, some of whom he thought had loved him, and all of whom he believed he could direct with a master spirit.

Vehemence (however controlled by kindness and reason) was the character of Wentworth's mind, and sometimes got the better of him, though reason soon re-established her rule. But, while actually under the effect of strong feeling, it was not always that he could silence suspicion, or abstain from wronging a fair nature and integrity, perhaps as clear as his own. He did so on this occasion by De Vere.

He had regarded him, it is true, for his fine mind, and the ardour of his character, but as, during the time he had seen most of him, Lord Mowbray and his friends were seemingly united with him in party, he had no opportunity of distinguishing the very different sorts of attachment with which they and De Vere viewed him. And, as to fine minds, and energetic characters, he had discovered, by experience, that in the career of party, they were perfectly consistent with the abandonment of friends, and the leaguing with enemies, of however opposite principles, characters, or objects.

When, therefore, De Vere waited upon him, in fact, to assure him how little he had agreed with his uncle's late measures, and to ask his future intentions, with a view, if he could, to give him his support after his election to parliament; Wentworth prevented all explanation, by a reception of the most freezing kind.

To De Vere's general assurances, he scarcely listened, and smarting at every pore with the injuries he had received from Lord Mowbray, impatiently, and almost sneeringly, interrupted him, by asking if he had come with avuncular discretion, to announce that he meant to adhere to the politics of *the* family?

De Vere looked astonished.

"Believe me," added the deserted Minister, "if this be so, and if that wise man Mr. Clayton, (wise he is in his generation,) has made you as wise as himself, you might have spared me the honour of announcing it in person."

Then, seeing De Vere about to reply, and fearing some unsatisfactory explanations, he asked him what he thought of the new actress,—naming an exquisite performer, who was a great favourite with him.

De Vere was shocked, and even angrily indignant at these insinuations. He proudly said he had not deserved them; that he had come with very different intentions, encouraged as he had always been by the Ex-minister, to speak to him frankly; but finding that this tone continued no longer, he would not intrude, and he prepared to take his leave.

The Ex-minister had, as we have said, been soured by his disappointments, and, as we see, could ill-treat his friends while under this feeling. On this occasion, even De Vere's open manner, did not effectually cure him. He however lent himself so far to it, as at least to wish for inquiry.

"Stay," said he; "have you really had no explanations with your uncle? Have no prospects of office been open to you, after your election, if you support his line of politics?"

"None," said De Vere, loftily, "and I feel no honour in being asked these questions?"

"Bear with me," said Mr. Wentworth, "once more, and forgive one other question; my reason for which, if necessary, I promise to explain. Has no hope of a certain lovely lady been conceived, or at least no influence on her part been practised, to win an assent, which less refined temptations, I know, could not seduce from you?"

The coloured flashed in De Vere's cheek when he heard this. He breathed quick. Could the lovely lady mean Constance? and was that secret (disguised as much as possible, almost from his own heart) not only known, but trumpeted to the world? It was a minute before he could reply. At length he haughtily answered, "I know no lady who would stoop to the endeavour to persuade me to that, which she thought I otherwise disapproved. But I own I resent these suspicions. They do not raise my opinion of your justice, and they diminish the regret with which I had seen the disappointment of my hope of your continuance in power; for I know nothing of the bribe you are pleased to impute to me, nor would it be able to influence my support or opposition to any public conduct you might think fit to pursue."

"Explanations, therefore," replied Wentworth, with equal distance, (but still misunderstanding him,) "seem unnecessary."

"I cannot suppose myself of consequence enough," answered De Vere, "to make you condescend to them; but the suspicions which, without proof or inquiry, you have been pleased to indulge, of the probity of my intentions, make such condescension of less consequence." Here he bowed, as if taking leave; but willing, nay, hoping to be prevented, as he might have been, by the slightest manifestation of regret or explanation. But the Ex-minister bowed too, and, to own the truth, with the most frosty politeness; and De Vere, hurt to the quick, took his leave.

"And this is the justice of party!" said De Vere, when he found himself alone. "This the course of political friendships! Yes! I have, indeed much to learn."

His abstraction became so great, that he wandered almost to Kensington before he knew where he was; and twice his name was called by Lord Eustace, before he had recollection enough to answer.

This ardent young person, now at the height of joy from the complete success of his father, stopped not to inquire through how many crooked paths the race had been run; what promises had been broken; what friends lost; what principles compromised. New kindled hopes had made up for violated engagements; converted antagonists had replaced old allies; and a more practical policy had, perhaps, more than made up for antiquated principles, now laid aside. The world sat light upon him, and success had made him indifferent to a host of enemies which the preference of his father to his rivals had in an instant created.

When this hostilily was observed upon by a friend to Lord Oldcastle, the elder statesman only shook his head, and said, "We must deal with it as we can." The younger exclaimed, "So much the better; a ministry without a good rattling opposition, must be milk and water."

De Vere could hardly help envying Lord Eustace his undeviating ardour for the accomplishment of his object, and his ease, as to consequences, now it was accomplished. He was a spirited soldier of fortune, who thought only of success in the cause he fought for, and the comrades who fought with him: these were questions of much more importance than what the cause was, or who the comrades. At the same time, as a part of the ruling passion, his interest was always excited by the hopes of strengthening his father's ranks, or weakening those of the enemy. He had also liked De Vere, the partner of his studies, and his early ally; and though he had cast him off when he found him guilty of the hateful sin of preferring his father's rival, yet, as he had heard that that Minister had, in a fit of resentment, included De Vere in a pretty vehement censure of the whole Mowbray connexion, not only he was struck with the hope of making a proselyte, but all his good-will returned: he therefore greet-

ed De Vere with his usual frankness—a salution which could not well be refused.

"We are together again," said Eustace.

"I never knew we had been asunder," answered his friend.

"He who is not for me is against me," rejoined Eustace; but I heard you were not even neuter: and you have been prettily rewarded; for the great patriot (so he named Mr. Wentworth) abuses you and your whole family most roundly, I assure you."

The observation could not have been worse timed.

"I am afraid some of us have deserved no better of him," said De Vere.

"As if political engagements, which are always made for the public good," answered Eustace, "were not to yield to circumstances, when that good requires it."

"That is to say," replied De Vere, "[redacted] one is to judge for himself, as to a change, and [redacted] and lose as he pleases."

"Hang me if I argue it with you," [redacted] the young politician; "I am in too good spirits,—but I'm afraid the late Minister (meaning the retired Premier) will die: they say the gout has got to his stomach, and he cannot survive three days."

"I am glad you are so interested for him," observed De Vere.

"I am interested that he should live, at least, a little while," replied Eustace; "for I want to attack him. He has left things in such a state, that you know not in how many points he is vulnerable: when I have exposed him he may die as soon as he pleases."

"Was he not once Lord Oldcastle's friend?" asked De Vere, greatly shocked.

"Rather Mr. Wentworth's," replied Eu[redacted] "and, to tell you the truth, he recommended hi[redacted] his successor."

"That is a vulnerable point, indeed," observed De Vere, and walked on in silence.

"Come," said Eustace, "I would rather talk of your own affairs. They tell me you despise us all so much in the House, that you don't think us worthy to be

mixed with; and wish to leave your seat to Clayton for a time, while you forget courts and courtiers in diplomacy."

"Does Mr. Clayton tell you so?"

"Yes! and Lord Oldcastle has cordially assented."

"You surprise me; for I have not even applied."

"But your uncle has; and you see he obeys the gospel, for he does not let one hand know what the other doeth. In short, it is all approved, and you are to have your choice of three courts. Cleveland has been much your friend, I assure you, as well as Clayton."

"Indeed!" said De Vere, who felt neither honoured nor pleased with either assurance.

Eustace, however, opened the subject more at large, and acquainted him that Lord Mowbray had asked and obtained for him the nomination of minister to one of the three legations vacant on the recent change; and that he might kiss hands upon it as soon as he pleased. "*Entre nous, mon enfant,*" said Eustace, "Lord Oldcastle expects [illegible] you. You may depend upon this as correct; and I wonder Clayton, who was charged with, and very instrumental in it, has not already informed you."

De Vere was filled with surprise, more at the news itself, than at the backwardness of Clayton in communicating it. But he was also embarrassed; which Eustace observing, De Vere said, "That with every sense of obligation to Lord Oldcastle, the matter was so new to him, that he begged time to consider of it."

"Do you mean," asked Eustace, "that Lord Mowbray and Clayton have been wrong in their representations?"

"I cannot say so exactly," returned De Vere; "but [illegible]ning has been lost in so many more interesting [illegible]s; and you know, or I am bound to tell it you, I am not one of Lord Oldcastle's lieges."

"Whose then?"

"No man's! for to no one do I, or will I owe fealty."

Eustace bit his lip with evident disappointment; but, as on the whole he liked De Vere, he allowed a frank

nature, for once, to get the better of his party-spirit, and very honestly, though ironically, said, "You are, indeed, a great deal too exalted for us poor slaves of Party at home, and wisely cut us; though whether for honester people abroad, remains to be seen. It is clear, however, you will never come up to Dr. Herbert's judgment of Clayton."

"What was that?"

"Why, at a dinner at Lord Clanellan's, where were the Doctor and other exemplary persons, the conversation turned upon the different modes of rising; and friend Clayton chose to doubt his talents that way, on account of the compliances and strange traffic which seemed necessary to conciliate different interests. Lord Clanellan stared, and Lady Clanellan laughed; but the Doctor exclaimed, in his oracular way, 'Never fear, Sir, never fear; I dare say you will in time make a very pretty rascal.'"

De Vere, amused, spite of his serious thoughts, asked if Clayton had assented?

"He had nothing left for it," answered Eustace, "especiallly as Lady Clanellan drank to his speedy success. But as he has not yet succeeded——"

De Vere shook his head.

"Come," said Eustace, "if you mean for joining Lord Oldcastle, when the King said *nay* to the high and mighty who wanted to enslave us, I, at least, must excuse him, whatever the Hagen Magen do. I trust, however, he has not been incorrect as to your views on diplomacy."

"With some reserves and explanations," said De Vere, "I might still have those views; and those explanations Lord Oldcastle will, I suppose, permit me to make."

"My father is the most reasonable man alive," returned Eustace, "and as I left him at leisure, we will, if you please, go to him directly."

De Vere wished more time. He had scarcely thought of the plan since it had been proposed; a thousand uncertainties hung about him; he wished for a long and deep self-examination as to his opinions of public life, of men, and measures; he wished explanations still,

(notwithstanding his recent loftiness,) with Wentworth; and, above all, he wished to probe his own heart in regard to Constance.

But all this was prevented by the alacrity of Eustace; who insisted upon De Vere's going with him immediately; and, in fact, carried and presented him to his father, when, leaving them together, he cried, "There! now tell your own story."

CHAPTER XIII.

DIPLOMACY.

Shall we call in the Ambassador, my liege?—
Not yet, my cousin. We would be resolv'd,
Before we hear him, of some things of weight.
SHAKSPEARE.

LORD OLDCASTLE was a man of the smoothest address, and of a most silvery eloquence, whether in public or private. He had the most perfect self-possession, and was the personification of the *Volto sciolto*. Whatever he said or did, was marked by a mixture of habitual good-breeding, and seeming frankness; and it was always a man's own fault if he ever felt under constraint in opening his thoughts to him.

The rectitude of De Vere never felt constraint in opening itself to any man; but Lord Oldcastle would have put him at his ease had it been otherwise.

With great openness, as well as kindness of manner, his Lordship himself began the subject; observing much upon his good-will towards his uncle, and, indeed, his obligations to him; to which he added the expression of great respect for De Vere himself. He then broached the question of diplomacy, descanted on the advantage of having a man of De Vere's birth and character, as the representative of the government at any court, and concluded by offering him the choice of the vacancies Eustace had mentioned.

To say De Vere was not pleased with this address, would be to wrong the truth. He was even won by it; and he felt the pleasure it would be, if the measures of such a man were what he could support. He had, however, many things to explain, and to guard, and had occasion for all his decision to prevent himself from being dazzled into general compliances, which might afterwards be attended with unpleasant consequences.

After thanking the Minister, therefore, for a reception so flattering, he begged leave, as the best return he could make, to explain with distinctness and honesty, how far Lord Oldcastle himself might judge he was in a condition to accept his offers.

Lord Oldcastle, with perfect frankness, said it was what he should most thank him for.

De Vere then explained to him, how much it had been his resolve, as well as his wish, ever since public life had been set before him, to keep himself distinct from party.

Lord Oldcastle smiled, but bade him go on.

De Vere continued, that it had been his hope, when he came into Parliament, to support the friends of his family; but his resolution was to give a reasonable, not a blind and slavish support.

Lord Oldcastle bowed, and with his hand spread on his bosom, said he wished for no other.

"It is, however, my duty, in honour, to add," proceeded De Vere, "that I am an admirer of the character, talents, and rules of action, of Mr. Wentworth."

Lord Oldcastle again smiled, but with a repressed curl of his lip, and not exactly with the same ease as he had smiled before. He, however, again begged De Vere to go on.

"I have to confess, therefore," said De Vere, "that I was glad of my uncle's reported junction with him, and was even hurt at the breach of a positive engagement. I felt thus from my admiration of Mr. Wentworth; but had the engagement been with your lordship, at such a breach, I should have felt equally mortified."

Lord Oldcastle smiled once more, and in a different

sort still; as if he had said, his young companion had not known what reason there had been for that very mortification. But he did not allude to it in his answer, when he assured him, that though the intimations he had given him had been *something* different from what he had hoped, and what he had expected, and that probably De Vere would live to see the impracticability of his principles; still, what he had said, seemed only to proceed from very honourable sentiments, which he should be the last to oppose. That, as to admiring Mr. Wentworth, it was only his own feeling, and could never be imputed as a fault to any one.

"I do not collect, however," added Lord Oldcastle, good-humouredly, "that if you come into Parliament, you are enlisted under Mr. Wentworth, or against His Majesty's Government."

"Certainly not," answered De Vere; "but I own that his secession from the ministry is one inducement the more to make me think of diplomacy; which may take me from the sphere of party (for which I am not fit,) and allow me to give my undisturbed attention to a great public duty, without any other pledge than a desire to perform it."

"All that is very prudent and praiseworthy," said Lord Oldcastle bowing, though with a little less ease; "and I am sure, if you are adopted into diplomacy, with such determinations, the secrets of government cannot be unsafe when entrusted to you."

"I should hope," observed De Vere, "that no man of honour, if once he accepted employment, could render them unsafe, though he might differ with his employers on general politics, or even opposed them in parliament."

"Again let me recommend your liberal notions," said Lord Oldcastle; "and if practicable any where, I am sure they are in diplomacy, in which there are not the personal and daily struggles that divide us at home; —accordingly, we have instances of men connected with the determined opponents of government, who have served the administration (because serving their country) with the utmost fidelity and honour. Never-

theless, when they have returned home, and their missions have ended—"

"They would deserve the rack," vehemently interrupted De Vere, "if they turned the information they had acquired against the government that had employed them."

"Nothing more just, nothing more honourable," observed Lord Oldcastle (again placing his hand on his bosom, as if penetrated with the sentiment); "but my experience has led me to think that all young men have not the exalted notions of Mr. De Vere;—I dare say we now understand one another,"—and he almost bowed him out.

Now here, if Lord Oldcastle understood Mr. De Vere, it was infinitely more than Mr. De Vere did Lord Oldcastle; and in this ignorance the reader probably will participate. Yet, as if the result had been explicitly established, the minister shook De Vere heartily by the hand, and De Vere found himself in the street, without a notion whether any, or what arrangements had been settled between them.

On leaving the house, and within a few yards of it, he saw Mr. Wentworth, who, eyeing him sufficiently to mark that he had seen where he had been, passed on apparently unconscious of the salutation which De Vere could not help bestowing upon him.

"He did not see me," said De Vere; "it is impossible his great mind can continue under the error of the morning. He must know the fidelity of my attachment to him:" and with this consoling reflection, De Vere gave himself up to the various and new interests which now pressed upon him on every side.

His first impulse was to seek Constance; for his heart longed to communicate with hers. But, amid the Bellamonts and Clevelands who besieged her, how was he to find one of those moments once so sweet to him, and, we may add, so serviceable? Besides, had he settled the point, whether he could leave her?—leave her for one or two years?—leave her at all? Eustace had driven so quickly, that he had not had time to decide this and other questions: among them, whether he should relinquish his intended seat while

157650B

abroad, if abroad he went; and finally, whether or not he was suitable for the profession which he seemed about to embrace.

While meditating these subjects, he fell in with his old counsellor, Flowerdale, to whom he communicated his interviews with Mr. Wentworth and the present minister: Sir William did not seem to like the account of either.

"The bane of your political hero," said he, "is what, to some people might do good—his vivacity of feeling. He was unjust to you, when you sought him; and depend upon it, if he saw you come out of the minister's house, his feeling will not be allayed."

"Good heavens!" exclaimed De Vere, "are party politics so jealous?"

"The most jealous of all mistresses," said Flowerdale; "you will stand in need of all Mr. Wentworth's liberality, (and no man has more, when prejudice is over;) but you must wait his cooler moments, before you will be forgiven."

"How different," observed De Vere, "are the two men! The minister himself took my professions concerning his rival in admirable part."

Flowerdale smiled but looked incredulous.

"Well, but," said De Vere, "his consent to my entering upon diplomacy, notwithstanding my avowals as to my politics, was surely the most liberal thing in the world."

"Are you quite sure of this consent?" asked Flowerdale.

"He assented to my principles," returned De Vere; "and said, 'we now understand one another.'"

"And did you understand him?" asked Flowerdale.

'Twas a question De Vere had not quite considered; but he said it was an extraordinary one, as implying a doubt. "Even Mr. Wentworth's honest injustice," added he, "is better than this."

"A great deal," returned Sir William.

They walked on for some paces, when the Baronet asked, to which Court he inclined; but was surprised to

be told, that the whole thing had been so hurried, that he had not quite settled an important preliminary, whether he was fit even for the career itself.

"If I have mistaken Lord Oldcastle, I fear I am *not*," said De Vere; "for it is evident I am too sanguine. Yet why should a sanguine temperament be incompatible with the high notions I have formed of the character of the representative of a great nation? I can scarcely conceive any thing more noble!"

"Or less liable to be circumvented by cunning, and scoundrels!" said Flowerdale.

De Vere anxiously asked his meaning.

"The English," returned the Baronet, "were never famous for good ambassadors; even though educated in a foreign country, and, like the Duke of Berwick, in a foreign service."

"I know not your allusion," said De Vere.

"The little Italian Queen of Spain," answered Flowerdale, "got rid of him, you know, and sent him back to France. Being asked why she did not like him, she could only say, '*C'est un grand diable d'Anglois sec, qui va toujours droit devant lui.*'"

"Are we to regret this character?" asked De Vere.

"Not as men; but as diplomats, it might be as well if we had a little more of the Italian craftiness which is so often employed against us."

"I cannot agree with you," said De Vere, becoming thoughtful.

"Shall I tell you a story," resumed Flowerdale, "once related to me by one of the parties concerned, —a man full of sense and rectitude, and himself an ambassador?"

"By all means," said De Vere.

Flowerdale went on.—"'And why do you go away, when you say you may remain here?' said Count Rhiensberg, one day, to the Baron de Lindendahl,— here, where you own you have a better salary, and affairs are of most importance.'

"'Shall I tell you frankly?' answered the Baron.

"'Yes.'

"'Frankly, then, because by remaining here, my diplomatic *métier* will be spoiled.'

"'That I cannot understand. There are the greatest and most complicated affairs; the widest field for negociation; the—'

"'All very true, my dear Count; no difficulty, no intrigues, except in Parliament, or for power. None for us foreign ministers; very little room for reasoning; still less for persuasion; none at all for manœuvering. In short, these English are too honest to be good politicians themselves, or give any play to others who are.'

"'I don't yet comprehend,' said the Count.

"'You will, before you have been here six months. For, if what we have to propose is wise and just, and expedient for England, ministers adopt it without any management from us: if improper, or impolitic, why, it is rejected, and the devil himself cannot bend them. You can neither bribe nor cajole. The laws prevent the first; the numbers in the cabinet the last: fear of the confounded Parliament both.'

"'Has, then, a minister for Foreign affairs here really no weak side?'

"'If he have, and you find it out,' said the Baron, 'of what avail? You must also get at the Premier's weak side, and the Chancellor's weak side, and the weak sides of all those who have to speak to measures in both Houses.'

"'Umph!' said the Count.

"'And therefore, I will go home,' said the Baron; 'my *maitre d'hotel* would make as good an envoy as I, provided he could deliver memorials with a good grace. My Government at home draw the memorials, and the Government here draw the answers; so, but for communicating events, which the newspapers know much better and sooner than we, we are of no use at all: and hence, I will go home again,' concluded the Baron.*

* The substance of this conversation is not imaginary, and it coincides extraordinarily with the following opinion of Mr. A. de Staël Holstein, who seems sometimes, and notwithstanding some amusing blunders, to have viewed us well. "*Il n'y a pas de pays en Europe, où le métier d'Ambassadeur soit plus simple qu'en Angleterre, et où toutes les finesses, toute l'habileté pretendue de la Diplomatie, sont plus en pure perte.*"

Lettres sur l'Angleterre.

"Your story," said De Vere, "does not make me regret that I may probably be thought, like your Duke of Berwick, '*un grand diable d'Anglois sec, qui va toujours droit devant lui.*' However, I do not like your account of the people I may have to deal with."

"Wait till you are appointed," returned Flowerdale, "before you make yourself uneasy."

CHAPTER XIV.

ESTRANGEMENT.

I do believe it, for they pass'd by me
As misers do by beggars; neither gave to me
Good word, or look.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE next day De Vere, still uncomfortable at his reception by Wentworth the day before, resolved to call upon him again, 'spite of those little hauteurs which, at first, had withheld him. But sleep had done much for him, as it always will for any good mind; nor can I think that man amiable, or even innocent, who, after the placidity and refreshment of a night's rest, can awake only to his resentments. He must forget the being who sheds this balmy blessing over our shattered, perhaps perverted senses, and who enjoins the forgiveness of all injuries before the sun goes down upon our wrath.

De Vere presented himself, therefore, early in the morning at Mr. Wentworth's, and was ushered into a waiting-room, Mr. Wentworth being above stairs. What was his surprise, to receive a note from him, couched in these terms:—

"Your visit to the Minister yesterday, speaks all you can have to tell me. You have made your election, and, far from complaining of it, I only wish to make

it more efficacious. It is useless, seeing me for my own sake; worse than useless, for your's.—This house is proscribed. You do ill to come to it.

"Adieu."

It would not be easy to describe the astonishment, mixed perhaps, with indignation, that took possession of De Vere on perusing this note. The injustice of it was not greater than its decision; its decision, apparently, than its pride.

And yet something whispered De Vere that the pride was not altogether without kindness. But to be so suspected! so misunderstood! Was party feeling to turn every thing into civil war? Were the decencies shown towards one side to be converted into proscription by the other? Above all, was a friend to be repudiated, without explanation or hearing? This thought inflamed De Vere. He no longer imagined kindness could exist where, on the face of it, there was so much studied rejection.

The servant who had brought the note, could not help observing it had agitated him, and asking if there was any answer, received such a peremptory "No!" that he quickened his movement in opening the door; and De Vere had scarcely descended the steps before he saw and was recognized by Lord Oldcastle, at that moment proceeding to his morning ride.

With all his command of countenance, his Lordship could not conceal his surprise; nor, 'spite of a very civil reception of De Vere's bow, his displeasure, though De Vere did not perceive it,

"Nor dreamed of ill—intending none."

A few hours, however, changed the face of things; for they brought him a letter from Lord Eustace, in which, after a thousand regrets that his efforts to serve so old a friend had failed, he said, "My father, who is the most straight-forward man alive, and most fearful of being misunderstood, has been uneasy, lest you should have indulged expectations from the conference *of yesterday*, which he never intended to raise. He

admires you, and commends your explicit avowals, but with the same honesty on his part, confesses that he does not think his Majesty's service will be best consulted, by appointing to high and confidential employ, persons, however honourable, who give their confidence to the opponents of the government."

In the temper he was in, excited by the note he had receeived from Wentworth, this letter surprised more than it affected De Vere. He cared little for the dispersion of his diplomatic visions, in comparison with his vexation at being set so low by the very person, for his fidelity to whom, in his eclipse, he was thus rejected by his successful rival.

"As to Lord Oldcastle," said he, "Flowerdale was right, and knew his man; for I find, that to understand one another with his lordship, is any thing but to know what is meant. Thus, I am thrown off by both parties; and thus fare the efforts of a plain man to preserve his mere freedom of action. But while I feel I am right, I will live for my own mind, not for others."

So saying, he stalked over the parade of the Horse Guards, in gloomy elevation of soul, and beheld the active spirits of the land, officers of state, generals, legislators, and judges, and the whole tribe of subordinates, all in motion, to and from the great scenes of business, the residences of ministers, the Houses of Parliament, the Council Chamber, and Westminster Hall. They were big with all the varieties of emotion which agitate poor human nature; some with fear and disappointment, some with hope and expectation; some raised, some mortified; but all excited and hurrying on in the same race, to be happy at the end of it till they started anew,—in order to be happier, or sink down for ever in feebleness and despondency, never to rise again.

He was saluted by many of his acquaintance, who supposed he was running in the same course himself; and who exhibited to his young but philosophic observation, countenances which, had he been a painter, he would afterwards have delineated; which, as a moralist, he often remembered. In proportion as *they* seemed interested, he by degrees felt, or thought he felt, above

all interest. "The world," said he, "uses me ill; why should I take part with the world?" and he began to meditate, as he always did on such occasions, on Talbois and Needwood. But he thought also of Castle Mowbray, and he thought of it with melancholy.

"It was there," said he, "*she* counselled me to pursue ambition, and I promised to do so; and would do so still for her dear sake; but, perhaps, that sake exists no longer; and for its own, what is ambition worth when Clayton succeeds?"

He was now near the gate of the minister's garden, which opening, there issued from it the very man he had just named, arm-in-arm with Eustace and Cleveland. They seemed in high spirits, and were proceeding to the House. But though they all evidently saw De Vere, and he was quite within hail, they as evidently wished to pass on without notice; a disposition with which his own was quite in unison. But a loud laugh from Clayton was echoed by the whole party, and alarmed his pride.

He was afterwards, indeed, ashamed to think how uneasy for an instant, this slight had been able to make him. And though not an ordinary character, this ought not to surprise; for even with persons lifted above ordinary life, among the whole range of the lesser evils, there is scarcely one that creates a feeling so sharp, as the changed behaviour of friends estranged from us by ambition. The blow to our love is hard to bear; but the wound to our pride is, for a moment, still harder. I say for a moment, because as soon as the independent spirit can assert itself, the cloud has past never to return. I speak, therefore, only of the actual passage from deference to indifference, from intimacy to distance, by those we have once loved; especially, if the change is accompanied by an assumption of superiority which we do not choose to admit.

The feeling operates differently upon different tempers. The meek lament; the humble shrink from it; the high-spirited meet it with proud defiance.

De Vere was, for the instant, among the proudest; and had not the gentlemen in question passed so rapidly on, he would have shown a resentment, of which he

would, one minute after, have been ashamed. That one minute, however, brought him back to reflection and to his own character. He then felt towards the two noblemen, little but indifference; for Clayton, nothing but contempt. "The upstart," said he, "has grown saucy under the wings of his new protectors. There let him nestle, till he leave them for higher protectors still. He is an excellent specimen of the reptilia, which the gallant Willoughby disdained."*

He mused upon this some time longer; and (perhaps, in a fit of disgust,) thought of writing to Lady Eleanor, to prepare for him at Talbois, where he pleased himself with happier visions of a life independent of these anxieties, and occupied with feelings belonging only to the worthier parts of our nature.

"There," said he, "the passions that blind us into a belief of what we know to be false, (that duplicity may be honour, and treachery success,) never have place. There, there is no friend who lets his disappointment misconstrue your actions; no eloquent cajoler, who approves sentiments which he thinks it right to punish; no miserable parvenu, who makes you a ladder to his ambition, and laughs at you for being so. No! for these there is no room in a place where the soul retires on itself, and suffices to its own health.

The thought pleased, as it always will; for there is something so soothing, to the imagination at least, in the notion of retirement to those who are buffeted by the world, that its seductions continue to influence the weary, and inspire hope in the troubled, 'spite of the thousand disappointments, which attend, and ever will attend, those not properly prepared for it.

But De Vere thought himself prepared, and started off to execute his design; when, suddenly stopping and striking his breast, he added with emotion; "But at Talbois there is no Constance! Alas! I want but the same convictions as to her, and adieu both to man, and woman. But till then," added he, again striking his bosom, "I feel that nothing can unseat her here."

* See vol. i.

The result was a complete overthrow of his sudden resolution, and a determination not merely to remain in town, but, as diplomacy was at an end, to claim instantly the possession of his seat; and with this view he resolved to seek an interview with his uncle.

On his return to his lodgings, he was surprised to find waiting for him a gentleman whom he had never before seen, and who with many bows, and some awkwardness, requested a five minutes' confidential conversation, with him. At the words "confidential conversation," De Vere eyed his new guest with curiosity; for in fact he seemed dropt from the clouds. He was, at least in his appearance, unlike all others with whom he had ever had any thing like business. He was a portly man, with a florid cheek and large limbs. He wore his own brown hair in the formal curl and club of the time, but without powder, and combed very smooth over the forehead. His clothes were equally plain, consisting of a pepper and salt full suit, of a very fine cloth, with black silk stockings, and silver buckles. His ornaments however, were a handsome cane, and a diamond ring, of both which he did not fail to do the honours by action, (of which he possessed a great deal,) while delivering what he had to say. De Vere, begging him to be seated, requested to know his business.

"Sir," said the stranger, after apologizing for his intrusion, "my name is Roebuck. I am told I speak to a gentleman of great abilities, as he is known also to be a man of the highest family, and one who—who—who has no reason to be content with the usage he has met with from the new government."

"Proceed, Sir," said De Vere; reddening, and not either understanding or liking this exordium.

Mr. Roebuck's ease rather failed him, on perceiving that he had to deal with a man, who could in a moment pass from great civility to as great sternness.

"I hope I shall not offend you, Sir," continued Roebuck, with a smooth bow; "but indeed what I have to say, proceeds solely from my desire, (as it behoves me,) to do justice to all parties."

"And who and what may you be, Sir," said De Vere, raising his voice, "who have a right to do justice, where (by one party at least,) it has not been invoked?"

"Sir," returned Roebuck, "you see before you a man not at all unknown, I may say even to Europe; and indeed it has been said, not more emphatically than truly, that the directors of the press are a power of Europe themselves."

"Still, Sir," said De Vere, after waiting a pause, "I have to learn what is your precise designation, and what has brought upon me the honour of this visit."

"I ought, indeed, sooner to have stated it," replied Roebuck, "but in truth, I supposed I might not be unknown to you, as I have the honour of being personally acquainted with most of the leading political characters of the day, who throng my shop, I may say, as much as Brooks's itself. In short, Sir, you see before you the publisher of all the most popular opposition tracts, whether in speeches, pamphlets, or poems, and as such, I believe I may say, one of the most powerful directors of public opinion in England."

De Vere lost his testiness at being so addressed, in his amusement at the man's foppery; and bowing low, said he was not insensible of the power and consequence of his visitor.

Highly flattered, Mr. Roebuck went on with more ease than before, and communicated to him, that by those invisible means by which vendors of politics pick up every thing, true or false, that is stirring in the world, he had heard that Mr. De Vere had been most grossly treated by the new minister, and even by his own family, purely and solely because he was a patriot. "Now, Sir," said Roebuck, "we, that is, I mean, our concern, who are patriots ourselves, and derive our unexampled sales from our patriotism, think that we should only do right by offering you all the facilities of our press, should you wish to attack the new ministry, or expose the treachery you have met with from tenders nearer home."

"And in what way, Sir," replied De Vere, desirous

of fathoming his real intentions, "am I to understand that you would have me do this?"

"Oh! Sir," said the bookseller, "it is not for me to prescribe to one, who, I am told, has first rate abilities, as well as so much cause to complain against certain persons. Only, as you naturally would wish to attack the measures of those who have personally used you so ill,—"

"Indeed, Sir," interrupted De Vere, "I naturally wish no such thing."

"What! not when they have tripped up the greatest man in the state,—Mr. Wentworth," replied the unabashed publisher, "and when they will, no doubt, break all their promises to this oppressed and gulled nation!"

"How do I know they will do this?" asked De Vere.

'Twas a question for which the opposition publisher was not prepared, and had only taken for granted, *in the way of trade*.

"Well, Sir," continued he, "I only mean that *should* they do so, as they *certainly* will, we shall be happy to publish any pamphlet you may choose to write upon it; and I beg to say, it shall cost you nothing. Let me add, that if your hesitation proceed from a dislike to expose your name, means may be afforded by which, through anonymous paragraphs or letters, you might easily punish *any* particular person, whose ingratitude, or treachery to you ought to be visited without the inconvenience of entering into a public quarrel. In short, you might write him down, and be in safety yourself."

De Vere felt all his indignation roused at a hint so revolting to his sense of honour; and in a raised voice, and a manner not over agreeable to the astonished Roebuck, (who thought he had made the most simple, friendly proposal in the world,) asked upon what part of his character he had presumed to found a notion the most insolent and despicable he had ever met with.

"Oh! good Sir," cried Roebuck in alarm; "I asten thousand pardons. I am sure I did not mean offend. I am sure I only meant to oblige you in off

ing what I knew hundreds of gentlemen would be glad to accept."

"Gentlemen!" exclaimed De Vere; "I, at least, am not one of them; and had I any thing to revenge, it is fit you should know that, however I may respect the liberty of the press, I should hold myself dishonoured to form such an alliance with it."

"Dear me!" said Roebuck, "this seems a most extraordinary misapprehension; for I meant every thing friendly, and as I told you, it should cost you nothing."

"Upon my word, Sir," replied De Vere, recovering from his indignation in his contempt, "your offer is a most generous one."

"I hoped you would think so," returned Roebuck, brightening up, "and I have only to give you my thanks for this important interview, and the kind confidence you have been so good as to repose in me."

De Vere now burst into laughter at the impudent conclusion the Director of public opinion had come to, and was about to reply, when with many bows, and hopes expressed that he should hear from him confidentially, the great political *terræ filius* took his leave, with the intention to publish to his shop, the confiding and friendly footing on which he had been admitted by Lord Mowbray's nephew, and the expectations that might be reasonably formed of a severe philippic (in which the uncle himself, any more than his secretary, would not be spared,) against the whole policy of the government. This intention, on the part of Roebuck, De Vere did not know; and the whole thing was so new to him, that he allowed the political bookseller to slip away, before he could even attempt to undeceive him.

Such a report, however, when spread, could not but come round to De Vere, with all additions and authorities; and as the visit of the busy Roebuck could not be denied, and a conference without witnesses was not to be ascertained in exactness, it is strange with what annoyance to his feelings this seeming trifle was attended.

The report was mentioned to him by Flowerdale

so cautiously, that it was evident he lent some credence to it.

"And you really think me already so corrupted by party," said De Vere, "even though I don't belong to one, as to attack measures which may be good, because I may have been ill-used by the men who support them. When next you think so, think also I can rob, or cut a throat."

"You revolt at this," observed Flowerdale, "yet nothing so common. Some of the most powerful of our political philippics have come from the pens of friends turned into enemies, or confederates who have been refused their just expectations."

"Know me better, at least," said De Vere, with emotion; "nor believe a talking vendor of scandal, under the name of patriotism, whom every body laughs at——"

"And every body courts," added Flowerdale.

"Impossible!" said De Vere, with almost horror.

"Yet true," rejoined the Baronet.

"How can a gentleman be safe where there is such manœuvring?" asked De Vere.

"By manœuvring himself," said Sir William.—"That is," added he, seeing him shocked, "by fighting with the same weapons; nor do I see why we should not use the press, as it is used against us."

"What! poison others because we ourselves have been poisoned!"

"'Tis the only way, and belongs to the mere system," said Flowerdale.

"Good God!" exclaimed De Vere, "to what are high characters reduced!"

"Shall I tell you? They must either wrap themselves in high virtues, and despise these attacks; which is somewhat difficult: or they must grow callous to them; which is not easy: or buy them off; which all cannot do: or play the same game themselves; which most think they *can* do."

"Any way then, we are at the mercy of the press," cried De Vere.

"Did not Mr. Roebuck tell you it was a power of Europe?" observed Flowerdale.

"But do you know any instances," asked De Vere, "of persons who could either despise or grow callous to falsehood?"

"A few," answered Flowerdale. "Some great minds think the press like the air, a chartered libertine, that blows on all it listeth; and, as for the callous, there is even Lord Eustace, already imbued so properly with this first quality of a public character in a popular state, that he thinks it a proof of merit to be abused."

"Roebuck, then, could have done nothing with *him?*"

"Oh yes! a great deal; by offering to puff him. Thus, one way or the other he holds King, Lords, and Commons in subjection."

"And what proof have you really of this?" asked De Vere.

"Why this: that, having no pretence whatever for it, but his types and his compositors; deriving little from fortune, less from birth, and least of all from education; he has set himself high enough to be an object of consideration, by means of this press, with persons who would not notice him without it. He talks to them *en égal*, and in some situations *en maïtre.*"

"This last I cannot understand," said De Vere.

"You shall judge," answered Flowerdale, and he mentioned one of the most brilliant members of the House of Commons.

"This gentleman," continued the Baronet, "frequently published his own speeches;—requested to do so by Roebuck, as you have been. Anxious once to be particularly correct, he passed the whole morning at this hero's; and, being hungry, was agreeably surprised by a cold ham and bottle of wine. Thanking him for his liberality, the candid Roebuck told him it was but in common course. 'I once,' said he, 'asked my old master, Cave, the secret of success in our profession.' 'Whatever you do,' said old Cave, 'remember always to *feed* your authors well:—and so Sir,' added Roebuck, 'I have ordered you a cold ham.' This to one of the most leading men in the senate!"

"And how did he take it?"

"He took the ham very cordially; and as for the

comment, laughed it off at the time, and afterwards told it as a piece of impudence among his friends."

"This is a prostration worse than any you have yet told me," said De Vere; "nor had I a notion of such influence."

"In a free country like this," observed Flowerdale, "it is a part of the price we pay for our freedom; nor do I know any thing equal to the adventitious personal consequence of one who really can influence the press, except that of the confessor of the Romish Church."

"Yet the whole of what Roebuck has propagated of *me*, is false," said De Vere.

"The more likely to be swallowed," answered Flowerdale.

"I see not what public men have left for it," observed De Vere.

"Only one of the four alternatives I have mentioned," replied the Baronet. "'Tis a severe tax, I allow," added he, seeing De Vere clouded with thoughtfulness; "but it is better than *lettres de cachet;* and, with all its disgusts, we do pretty well."

"I wish I had your phlegm," said De Vere.

"It might be of some advantage to your too great sensibility," observed Flowerdale. "Properly tempered, you might find the world not intended to be perfect; might love the good, see something bearable in the bad, and think it a happy world, after all."

CHAPTER XV.

A STORM AND A CALM.

Away with them! Let them be clapp'd up close,
And kept asunder.

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank.

SHAKSPEARE.

On De Vere's visit to his uncle, Lord Mowbray received the intimation of his wishes with surprise. He

had heard with alarm of his nephew's explanations to the Minister, and his visit to his rival; and was disposed to read him a lecture on his rash determination to ruin himself. But this De Vere begged him to spare. As to Diplomacy, Lord Mowbray thought the career ought not to be abandoned; and, in that case, the question of the seat might stand over. To this, De Vere peremptorily objected; observing that he would make no more advances either to Lord Oldcastle or Mr. Wentworth, but would maintain his own independence as well as he could.

As to the advances to Mr. Wentworth," said Lord Mowbray, "I think you quite right. But a resolution to shun a first minister is very different. My dear Mortimer, I wish I could recommend to you a little of the prudence of your friend Clayton."

De Vere assured him it was the last example he wished to follow.

"You wrong him," said Lord Mowbray; "and I can tell you that, in the affair of the seat—I mean in the delay of resigning it—he has been much your friend."

De Vere stared,—observing drily, that that was above his comprehension. He added, that since Lord Oldcastle's justice had closed his diplomatic views, he knew not how delay could benefit his parliamentary object.

Lord Mowbray, though on the subject which he most understood (the management of a borough interest), now found he was engaged in a task surpassing his powers—that of explaining a very fraudulent transaction to a very straightforward understanding, so as to conceal the parts borne in it by its principal managers. He understood it, he said, imperfectly; wished Clayton had been in the way; but, in short, there had existed for some time a conspiracy in the borough against the De Vere interest, so as to make any opening just now, with a view to one of that name, a matter of extreme danger.

"And has this conspiracy," asked De Vere, collecting all his coolness, "long been known to your lordship and Mr. Clayton?"

"To me," replied Lord Mowbray, "but a few months ago; to Clayton, I believe, longer; who did not inform you of it, only because he hoped to crush the revolt in its birth; and, at any rate, feared that your too high spirit might make things worse."

"I am infinitely obliged to him," observed De Vere.

"He is indeed a most prudent young man," replied Lord Mowbray, with some simplicity, "and I would advise you to consult him."

"That I will, wherever he is to be found," answered De Vere; and full to a tumult of thought, he, to his uncle's great relief, took his leave. He proceeded instantly to the House, where he rightly supposed this faithful friend to be, and called him forth by the following short note:—

"Things have been told me by my uncle, concerning the seat, which make it necessary I should see you directly."

The *parvenu* was by no means disposed to gratify him. He first turned scarlet, and then pale, and then secretly execrated Lord Mowbray as the worst of old fools; and to gain time (for thought at least,) he returned for answer, that the debate was so near closing, as well as so critical, that he could not leave the House, but would wait upon De Vere the next day.

To his annoyance, this did not deliver him; for De Vere returned, in a second billet, that as he should set off for the borough that very night, he insisted upon seeing him that instant, and, possibly, upon his accompanying him. "I do not," said he, "exact this as a friend, but as a man of honour, eager, no doubt, in all minuteness, to comply with its call."

Clayton could no longer refuse, and, like a wounded snake, dragged himself slowly up the stairs, which he ascended with almost as much alacrity as a thief going to be hanged ascends the ladder. In short, rising as Mr. Clayton was esteemed, few of the votaries of self-interest, could they have looked into his mind, would at that moment have thought him an object of envy.

The meeting was as decisive as it was short. "I suspend my final judgment," said De Vere, "for the evidence with which no doubt you will furnish me. Meanwhile it is but fair to tell you that I have the very worst suspicions; which, as a gentleman, (for it is mockery to call you a friend,) you are bound to dispel."

Clayton was appalled at his energy, which never seemed to have been so highly kindled; assured him he was wrong; promised to do any thing, and every thing, to clear his doubts, which to him were too painful to bear.

"Prove your sincerity," said De Vere, with an air of command, "by instantly accompanying me."

Clayton's heart fluttered, and he talked still of the debate.

"I will wait its close," answered De Vere.

"It will last all night," returned Clayton.

"Here is your billet," returned De Vere, "telling me the division was instantly expected."

The *parvenu* was abashed beyond recovery, and it ended in a promise to attend De Vere on his journey, at six o'clock the next morning. "Provide your own chaise, however," said De Vere; "we shall be bad companions for one another."

This was, in effect, the greatest relief the *parvenu* could have hoped, and he said it would be the more convenient, as the presence of Mr. Blakeney, the town clerk, who, he knew, was in town, would be of the greatest advantage, and he might, therefore, travel with him. "No, Sir," said De Vere, "your own servant, if any, will be your only companion. As Mr. Blakeney may be of such use, and *I* am the person whom it is intended to injure, I will be the person to profit by his information."

This decisive resolution astonished Clayton, who had not given De Vere so much credit for penetration as he had for vehemence of character. It alarmed as well as astonished him; for Blakeney was in possession of secrets which it might not be quite convenient to disclose.

The devil, however, for this time stood his friend.

Indeed, he is generally true to his vassals till the precise epoch for their destruction arrives. Blakeney was a coarse man, who affected to be nothing but what he was—devoted to his own interest. He neither possessed, nor pretended to the feelings of a gentleman; and was therefore unassailable on that side. He would have cared little for betraying Clayton's operations, of which he had had the management, provided he could have got more from De Vere for letting out the secret, than from Clayton for keeping it. But as he knew De Vere had not the means of being a good paymaster, while Clayton's promises were on the eve of being performed, it was beyond the rhetoric of De Vere to obtain any thing from this faithful scribe of the Corporation, that could either betray the conspiracy or remedy its mischiefs. All, therefore, that De Vere learned was, that the majority of the electors, though owing their qualifications entirely to himself, had resolved to put themselves in the hands either of Lord Cleveland or Lord Mowbray, to the exclusion of the old family; all which Mr. Blakeney said he was ready to make oath, had been opposed by Mr. Clayton to the utmost of his power. And, in truth, it was all (except the last circumstance) sadly confirmed on their arrival at the borough. Here De Vere instantly commenced a canvass, in which he confided strangely in the integrity of Mr. Blakeney, for direction as to the persons of most influence in the place, and most likely to give him true information as to the spirit of the voters.

But he insisted also on Clayton's supporting him; to which the latter, so far from refusing, with alacrity consented; and this imposed upon the loyal heart of De Vere, who almost repented of his suspicions. Nay, the meekness with which they had been borne, began to touch him with remorse; for nothing so keenly affects a kind and liberal heart as meekness in return for undeserved reproach. Never was any thing so true as that to a generous spirit, gentleness is the strongest of all enforcements.

When, therefore, De Vere, in his canvass, found himself warmly and promptly supported by Clayton,—

who even renounced to their faces, the votes which numbers voluntarily tendered him in preference to De Vere; and when he heard the reason for this fairly asserted to be the incapacity of De Vere to provide for them—the mind of the latter became a sea of doubt, self-blame, and disgust. He longed to atone to his former friend for the injury he had done him, and was angry with himself for his hasty harshness. But the mercenary corruption of the voters filled him with scorn. "I had hoped," said he, to some of them, "that the son of my father, who died for his country, would have been differently treated!"

"His dying will not make us live," said some of the churls; and De Vere turned from those who made the observation with a contempt which he did not even endeavour to conceal.

Clayton then stepped in, and professed that they leaned upon a shadow in hoping any thing from him; for he could do nothing for them if he would, and certainly would not if he could, after such treatment of his friend. ("I am protected then, it seems, by the worthy member," thought De Vere.) To this many answered with shrewd nods and winks and shakes of the head. "We knows better—you are the boy, and not Squire De Vere, as makes the placemen."

De Vere gave the matter up, returned to his inn, and was upon the point of asking pardon of Clayton for his unjust suspicions, when a note was put into his hand, rumpled and soiled, but the direction of which was in a character that fluttered his heart. Hastily opening it, he found it was the writing of Constance, though without a name, and contained these few words: "Put yourself in the hands of Mr. Mellilot; not of Mr. Blakeney.—Confide in this."

Greatly agitated, he asked for the person who brought the note, but he was gone. He therefore sallied forth alone, and inquiring the house of Mellilot, found him at his door. He was a fresh, open countenanced, but shy man, a small dealer in corn, and did the honours of a neat red-floored sort of kitchen parlour with much heartiness. But though a temporary feeling would sometimes make him assert himself very

warmly, a constitutional bashfulness prevented him, for the most part, from taking any active share in what was going forward; and Blakeney had denounced him as a man not to be depended upon.

Within his own dwelling, however, he seemed to have the ease as well as the comforts of a thriving country shop-keeper. He presented his wife to De Vere, a comely lass of about thirty, as neat and shining as the brasses that were ranged upon her dresser, or the bright andirons that ornamented a wide opening chimney, where were two corner seats, which in winter were the chosen abodes of warmth and comfort. The dame surveyed De Vere with great curiosity; and having more loquacity than her John, (as she called Mellilot,) would have bestowed much of it upon him. She professed the warmest wishes for his success in the canvass;—in which, though sincere, she was perhaps actuated at least as much by jealousy of the Town Clerk's wife, who held her at a great distance, as attachment to De Vere.

Perceiving, however, that she was in the way, after a few civilities she opened a side-door, hung with cloaks and bonnets, and made her escape up a little blind staircase: which, however, she would not have done so soon, if she had not known that her John could keep nothing from her, but would disclose his whole conference with the Squire at night. With this praiseworthy, and indeed rare suspension of a woman's, and even a wife's curiosity, she busied herself in matters of domestic economy, above stairs, while the state affairs of the borough proceeded below.

The information which the honest corn-dealer had to give was soon developed; for John Mellilot had more honesty in his composition than words; and indeed, De Vere defrayed most of the conversation, by a proper adaptation of questions to John's favourite monosyllables of yes, or no, to which he seemed glad to confine his answers.

To be short, De Vere learned, to his dismay, that within a few months after Clayton's election, the Town-clerk Blakeney had begun to hold language new to the borough; to the effect that the Squire was a

proud unyielding sort of a man, like his father—who would never support even his uncle in the government, and would never ask a favour for any one, but leave his constituents to starve; that Squire Clayton was the opposite of all this, and could do more by holding up a finger to Lord Mowbray, (who could do what he pleased at the Treasury,) than De Vere could ever manage in a thousand years; that it was beggary, therefore, to support the one—good wages and thriving to keep the other; that to be sure they derived their freeholds from the Squire—but all right was in the law, and what the law gave was their own, or they were all perjured when they came to take the oath. This being incontestable, it only behoved them, for the sake of their families, to consider who would be their best friend, Mr. Clayton or the Squire; and that no one could say they were ungrateful in this, since they only transferred themselves from one part of the family to the other.

All this was opened by the Town-clerk, at first to his particular cronies in corners, over a pipe and mug, but afterwards in little knots of the borough politicians, assembled for the purpose. In these last, the scribe experienced much opposition, particularly from the older voters, who had held under the General, and swore it would be a disgrace to old English hearts to abandon his son. Mellilot was one of these, and was only prevented by his shy character from showing his zeal in very warm expressions of it; having been known to say, behind his counter, to a few private customers, that the Town-clerk deserved to be hanged, and Mr. Clayton, who had set him on, was little better. He carried his feeling indeed so far, that he had once nearly gone to the Castle, to blow them all up, as he said, by informing Lord Mowbray, who would no doubt, he thought, punish this treachery to his nephew. In fact, John actually did take some steps towards this, by acquainting his sister, Miss Mellilot, (who we may remember was Lady Constance's woman,) and who was entirely in the interest of the Squire, because, as she said, he had the finest eyes, and whitest teeth, that ever were seen.

Upon the point of Clayton's interference, De Vere being very particular, he drew from John that he himself had once mustered up boldness enough to speak to the Secretary, "Who not then knowing," said John, "of what kidney I was, tould me Mr. De Vere was very indifferent about the parliament, and so long as the borough continued true to his uncle, he did not care who had the seat. I own," added Mellilot, "I thout this were a bit of a lie, becase I had a letter from sister in my pocket, telling me how all the Castle expected your coming in, and that Mr. Clayton, for all he were at first no better than a clerk, and not so good as the steward, were as proud as Lucifer, and stingier than the steward himself."

De Vere, in his then state, was more grieved than surprised at this information; but was in one respect relieved from his painful doubts respecting the real character of his fellow-student. He also now discovered the clue, by which the kindness of Constance had been enabled to send him the important hint, which had led to this critical conference. For a correspondence, it seems, had been kept up between the brother and sister, if correspondence it could be called, where the lady wrote four letters to one note, and the letters contained each four pages, while the note seldom exceeded four lines. Miss Mellilot, however, was a politician in petticoats, as well as many of her betters; and frequently wrote such things of what was now passing in London, as astonished the whole borough. For though, whenever a letter came, John was quiet about it, Mrs. Mellilot never went out without taking it in her pocket for the use of her neighbours; and, till it was completely exhausted, she was seldom at home.

The result was fatal to De Vere's present views; for, after a very special investigation of the state of the voters, and the little promise his canvass had afforded, (in all which the zealous corn-dealer gave too accurate intelligence,) he found that were Clayton to vacate, his own return would be the reverse of secure. While deliberating upon it, he received a note from Clayton himself; in which, after professions that made him sick, he assured him, not only that he was prepared to

vacate, but would refuse to sit, if again returned. He was, however, so ill formed, he said, for the unkindness of De Vere's suspicions, and likewise so much wanted by the Government in town, that he could not wait an interview; but was at that moment stepping into his chaise to return.

"'Tis for you, my dear sir," said the conclusion of the note, "to consider how far you will think it right to endanger the *family* interest, and exclude Lord *Mowbray's* influence, should I vacate, by the introduction of Lord Cleveland; whose agents are, I assure you, on the watch, and desire nothing better than a rupture between you and your uncle."

De Vere's astonishment at the cool impudence of this note, was only equal to his indignation. "Family interest!" exclaimed he. "Lord Mowbray! What family was ever known in this place but De Vere's? What Mowbray ever had footing here, but as his guardian, or the protector of an interest which has been so basely supplanted! Yes! Lord Mowbray! It is indeed, your influence now, and much I fear

'Thou playedst most foully for it.'"

He then reverted to what was said of Lord Cleveland, which he considered as a refinement of finesse; and growing warmer and warmer, "Better," he cried, "it were ravished a thousand times by open force, than sapped by cunning and the hypocrisy of the devil. Yet that I should have given my heart to this man! this schoolfellow, whom henceforward I will trust as I would a fanged serpent."

He would have gone on, but grew ashamed of his vehemence, and exerted his self-control. Then, recollecting the billet of Constance, he pressed it to his lips, and in a subdued tone whispered to himself, "Yes! there is at least one redeeming flower that grows among these weeds—a flower without spot or thorn." And with this reflection, he suffered his mind to wander so sweetly to the kind watchfulness over his interest, which she had just shown, that his heart suddenly became softened. He thought of all her goodness—all

her graces; forgot her present career; forgot his present anger; and forgot even Clayton himself, in the emotions which this unobtrusive proof of recollection inspired. Soft! sacred! and happy moments! How soothing to the sharpest vexations of even disappointed ambition! How enviable, whenever enjoyed! but ah! how few and fleeting in the life of man!

The effect of these tender sentiments did more for him than all his endeavours, from reason, to recover the tone of his mind. He dined by himself; was all the better for Clayton's retreat; and said he would give the rest of the day to deliberation; for which purpose he appointed Mellilot, and one or two others, to attend him. But he dined with Constance's billet open on the table, and pored over it more than upon the substantial fare that courted his appetite.

'Twas the month of May; the evening was serene and genial; and throwing up the window which opened upon the inn-garden, full of freshness from a gentle rain that had just fallen, his ear was caught by chirpings, and his eye by blossoms—the harbingers of Spring. The effect was calming to his nerves; and placing Constance's billet next his heart, he wandered out of doors, for a moment, as he thought; but pursuing the course of a little stream which led from the garden into the outskirts of the town, he insensibly commenced a long and devious walk, in which he thought only of Constance, and forgot that a committee of friends, appointed by himself, was at that moment awaiting his return. 'Twas a strange absence of mind; but are we to blame the happy elasticity of heart which could expand itself with such soft and delightful feelings, the very instant after it had been contracted by a shock of passion? Assuredly not! The man who possesses it, is more enviable than he, who, without it, revels in thousands. Yet, it is not known at St. Stephen's nor St. James's; still less in the city, or Westminster Hall; seldom, indeed, in the business of life; never in its ambition. Let those, then, who enjoy, never stop to inquire where they found it, but hug it as a treasure, and never part with it. It will serve them as armour to prevent, or as a balsam to heal the

lacerations which, in the warfare of life, the best of us are doomed to encounter.

The evening overtook him in a small hamlet, about a mile from the town. Here he had lingered in the twilight, till the twilight itself was sunk. The dews rose fast, and the sound of the village doors closing for the night, and lamp after lamp lighting up in the cottages, informed him, almost to his surprise, that the day was gone. It was then only that he recollected how much too late he must be for his appointment, and turned his steps back to the borough. Yet, even then, he could not help stopping to inhale the perfume of the bean-flower, and to mark, with a painter's eye, the evening landscape before him. In truth, he loitered, spite of business, occupied with far other thoughts, nor minded the gaze of passing travellers, hastening to their shelter, or labourers going home from distant work, who wished him good-night, with respect mingled with curiosity. Perhaps of all the scenes made pleasing from association, there is not one more interesting than the approaching thus to a small town, at the coming on of night, when the inhabitants are retiring to their little domiciles, to forget in happy quiet the anxieties of the day. How often have I myself stopped to watch figures reposing in the dusk, with no seeming enjoyment but of rest after bodily fatigue.

Yes! often have I stood to observe even children at play, till the very last tinge of light closed upon their sport; when I have still followed them through the open doors of their homes, and, seen them and their families afterwards assembled at their simple supper, unconscious, or unmindful of being gazed at through their casements; alive only to their own little world, and careless of what might at that moment be agitating a greater. Then, indeed, is the time for reflection on the true value of things, and the little efficacy of the proudest lot to produce one spark of pleasure more than was designed by the Father of all, for the meanest of his children.

But if this be the feeling of a mere casual observer, what must it be with the pilgrim who is wandering under a weight of care? He is peculiarly alive to it,

and envies even the smallest appearance of quiet and shelter of which he feels he stands so much in need.

At this moment, De Vere was such a pilgrim, and such were his reflections on re-entering his inn.

How different those of Clayton, now far on his return to the scenes for which he had sacrificed for ever the very power of making any moral reflection at all!

Escaped from the man he had betrayed, whose expected reproach he could not bear to think of, he was, on setting off, as happy, as relief from immediate danger makes the coward who dares not encounter it. But, like the coward, his terror continued long after the danger was over. He feared meeting De Vere in the town; he feared pursuit: he bribed the postilion to drive fast, and pressing his hat over his face, shrank into the corner of the chaise, and remained immoveable for at least a mile. Then recovering a little, he stretched his neck out of the window, and perceiving he was not followed, began to indulge in reflections of a very different kind, for

"Ease will recant
Vows made in pain."

We do not know that Mr. Clayton made many vows, but he certainly was never more uncomfortable in his life, and *almost* wished he had never engaged in this work of treason.

We have often stated that he had feeling, and that he was alive for the moment to what was reported of him in the world. We say the world, because we are by no means positive that this extended to the whisperings of his own heart. At any rate, where his advancement was concerned, he was an admirable sophist; and on this occasion his sophistry admirably served him. At first, indeed, his treatment of his benefactor gave him a few uncomfortable twinges which his heart did not like. But he reminded himself that it was now too late, as he had already felt and subdued those feelings, when first he had conceived and

adopted his project, which it would be silliness now to abandon. He had paid the price of the odium of it, and it would be hard, indeed, to deprive himself of the profit. Then, as to the injury done to De Vere, it was but imaginary; for it was incontestible that he was not fit for parliament, and still less for office; and Mr. Clayton was therefore quite sure the time would come, when De Vere would thank him for having detached him so early from what was so little suited to his inclinations, in order to enable him to follow what was,—we mean leisure, letters, and mental refinement. He wound up with his duty and gratitude to Lord Mowbray, whose power and consequence he was thus augmenting, and who deserved from him, he thought, every service he could render, at whatever price.

With these happy reasonings and consolations, Mr. Clayton resumed his firmness, as the distance increased between him and the friend he had deceived. The borough he began now to consider as his own, perhaps for ever; and that thought brought on other visions of place and power, and a life passed among the great, (perhaps even an alliance with them,) all of which was so pleasingly contemplated, that he wondered at the compunctions which had at first assailed him. By the time, therefore, that he had reached London, he began to think himself one of the powerful of the land, and that he had repaid all his obligations to Lord Mowbray; if indeed the balance did not now incline to the other side.

De Vere remained a day longer in the borough, concerting such measures as he thought most provident to restore his lost interest, during which he received strong hints from Blakeney, that, upon certain conditions and compliances, the task would not be difficult. To this he replied with such scornful rejection, that the affronted Blakeney (who was a son of ambition too, in his generation) gave him fair notice he would make him repent it. De Vere smiled in contempt, at a wretch, who, he said, was too despicable for chastisement; and perceiving he had no hope of the seat at present, sat down to acquaint Lady Eleanor with his disappointment. He remembered the allusion to *Francis I.* made some years before by his friend Her-

bert, when he defended the career of ambition against Harclai,* and thought the time was come, when he too, might say to his mother, "Madam, we have lost all except our honour."

CHAPTER XVI.

SUCCESSFUL MACHINATION.

How insolent of late he is become!
We knew the time since he was mild and affable,
And, if we did but glance a far off look,
Immediately he was upon his knee.

SHAKSPEARE.

On quitting London two days before, Clayton had only time to acquaint his patron, by a short billet, with the intention, and the impetuosity of De Vere. It was breakfast-time at Lord Mowbray's when he returned, and he found the earl and his daughter at table. Both were surprised at the suddenness of his re-appearance, and Lord Mowbray was so anxious to know the result, as not to take the numerous hints given by his Secretary, that they had better be alone before he unburthened himself. Lady Constance understood these hints no better than her father, and Clayton was therefore forced to answer (directly, or indirectly, as he found it convenient,) all that was asked him, both by father and daughter.

The questions of Constance were so clear and penetrating, particularly in regard to Mr. Blakeney, that Lord Mowbray was surprised, and his confidant a little dismayed, at her information. But when, with a very pointed look, she asked if he knew who had first kindled this spirit of revolt, and whether Mr. Blakeney had had no secret instigator, Mr. Clayton had nothing left for it but to deny all knowledge of

* See vol. i.

the revolt itself, almost up to that moment. In proof of this, he said he had been so shocked by the ill usage of Mr. De Vere by the voters, that when he attended him in his canvass, and his fair rights were refused him, he had reproved them sharply, and positively refused for himself, to have any thing to do with them. So saying, to avoid pushing the subject, he made a pretence of searching for some papers in the library, to leave the room.

"My cousin then," said Constance, when he was gone, "is to be *protected* by this gentleman."

"I think," answered Lord Mowbray, "we are at least obliged to him, for his zeal for the *family* interest."

"I did not know that our part of the family had any share in the interest," observed Constance.

"It is surely all the same," said Lord Mowbray, uneasily; "but Mortimer has been sadly careless of it himself; and you see it may even be lost to Lord Cleveland, if Mr. Clayton do not stand forward."

"And is this Lord Cleveland's friendship?" asked Constance with some surprise.

"My dear Lady Constance," said her father, "ladies are not instructed in these matters; otherwise I would explain to you, that personal, and political friendships, are very different things."

"And which," pursued Constance, "in your lordship's opinion, is Lord Cleveland's?"

"At this moment," replied the earl, "both; but as no one knows how long our union may last, I own I cannot think him to blame for acting as if they might one day be divided. I would do so myself."

"And does this justify his interfering where he never yet had footing?"

"All is fair in politics, as in war," observed Lord Mowbray.

"And so my cousin, I fear, will find, not merely in the instance of Lord Cleveland," replied Constance.

Lord Mowbray did not like the conversation, and repeated the observation that ladies were not instructed in these things; to which his daughter thoughtfully

assented, and the breakfast was finished in silence, not to say constraint, on both sides.

To what was the puissant Earl—puissant in rank, birth, and wealth, and all that did not depend upon himself—to what was he reduced, when he felt relieved by his daughter's retiring from his presence? And what is there in the wayward mind of man to make him willing to forego the sweetness of a daughter's companionship, and lose the sweetness of a daughter's approbation for the hope of success in a despicable intrigue?

"Ill-weav'd ambition, how much art thou shrunk!"

Yet such is the character of the passion, if ill-directed, when it belongs even to nobler spirits, or in common course, when it actuates a meaner genius, that the dearest charities of our lives are sometimes set aside for power, or the supposed means of power.

On no other ground can we account for the pleasure with which Lord Mowbray heard from Clayton that De Vere himself now felt the impossibility of his being returned. He indeed did not go so far as openly to approve the conduct of Blakeney; nor did he much like to inquire whether his daughter's surmise, that there was some secret instigator to this conduct, was well founded: he therefore allowed Clayton to wrap up that point in whatever obscurity he chose.

"When my nephew returns," said Lord Mowbray, "we will have a conference upon all this."

"I am sure your lordship will excuse my attending it," observed Clayton; "I can resent nothing against Mr. De Vere, but I am certain you will not desire me to subject myself to dishonouring suspicions."

"No surely," returned Lord Mowbray, thoughtfully; "and yet he is so untoward, that I could wish not to have him singly upon my hands. It is astonishing how different he is from what his brother was in these respects."

"Suppose you were to consult your common friend, Dr. Herbert," said Clayton.

"An excellent thought," observed Lord Mowbray.

The Doctor was accordingly sent for, and the whole affair laid before him, or rather concealed from him, in such glosses as Lord Mowbray and his Secretary chose to give it. Strange to say, he refused his assistance, or even advice; sheltering himself, by observing it was a family matter, in which the parties not only were the best judges for themselves, but the only judges.

In truth, the shrewd divine had too much penetration not to see that the whole was an intrigue, and a very scandalous one, of Clayton against his benefactor; and that Lord Mowbray, if he had not participated in its guilt, was at least not active in detecting it. The good Doctor's indignation was therefore raised against this calculating guardian and treacherous friend. He did not indeed go so far as Swift, who, when he was tricked out of a rich deanery by his patron, in league with his Secretary, exclaimed, in unrepressed anger, "G—d confound you both, for a couple of scoundrels!" but he could not conceal from Lord Mowbray himself, his opinion of the attempt; and he let Mr. Clayton know what he thought of his share of it, in a manner so bitterly sarcastic as to be by no means pleasant to that sensitive gentleman.

The genius of Clayton, indeed, was always rebuked by that of his late governor, whose eye and dry remarks he never could stand. And as feeling and fine sentiment always made him miserable during the suffering moment, he hastened from the Doctor's presence on the present occasion, as soon as he could form a specious excuse for it.

When gone, Herbert had still to sustain the complaints of Lord Mowbray against the impracticability of De Vere upon all points; and particularly his most unheard-of awkwardness of confession before the first Minister, in the very moment when he was charging himself with pushing his fortune in diplomacy. The particulars of all this he detailed, and Herbert listened with marked interest.

"It seems then," said the Doctor, at the close of the conversation, "that this untoward boy, as your lordship still calls him, sacrificed himself before Lord Oldcastle, to a silly honesty, in confessing his partiality to his late colleague."

"Indeed he did," replied Lord Mowbray; "and I cannot tell you how it has vexed me.

"It would vex any politician alive," said Herbert, as he took his leave, and hastened to Mr. Wentworth himself.

CHAPTER XVII.

RECONCILIATION.

> And not a man, for being simply man,
> Hath any honour, but 's honoured for those honours
> That are without him; as place, riches, favour,
> Prizes of accident, as oft as merit.
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

HERBERT's theories were, as we have seen, in favour of practical exertion; and his caution was habitual in guarding young men against the imprudence of self-sufficiency, which many worshipped under the name of *proper* pride, but which, in his way, he used to call proper nonsense. But he was as alive as any man to true honour and independence of character. His regard for De Vere had increased with his respect: and though he had done what he thought necessary, when too jealous a spirit required the curb of friendly experience, there were points in which he wished more young men of his acquaintance resembled De Vere. He preached as much against the *compromising*, as the *uncompromising* spirit. He laughed at the silly irritability of those whose pride had nothing to support it but self-consequence. But he had the most sincere respect for real dignity of mind; and, allowing for some little jealousy of temper, such he thought was De Vere's.

But Mr. Wentworth had complained to him, that even De Vere had been as fickle as the rest of his followers, and had sold himself to Lord Oldcastle for a mission abroad. Herbert was incredulous to obstinacy;

Mr. Wentworth insisted; and they separated, unable to agree.

Lord Mowbray's account, therefore, was as satisfactory as the Doctor could have hoped; and the extinction of De Vere's views, hastened by his being seen by Lord Oldcastle coming out of Mr. Wentworth's house, not only furnished him with a complete defence of his young friend's fidelity, but with a strong claim upon the Ex-Minister's gratitude.

Thus armed, he changed the whole state of Mr. Wentworth's feeling, by a simple relation of facts. For such is the nature of true greatness, that simplicity is ever its favourite companion. Rhetoric is thrown away upon it, even if it is not calculated to disgust and revolt it. Truth, unvarnished truth, is all that it requires to make it decide rightly, whatever may be the embarrassments thrown in its way, even by its own prejudices.

Doctor Herbert sought not, therefore, by any art to advocate the return of Mr. Wentworth's confidence in De Vere's honour. Nor was he wrong:

> "He what was honour knew,
> And understood his pleaded reason."

Mr. Wentworth, in short, with feelings as glowing as his abilities, was a proof (whatever may appear to the contrary in this story) that there may be minds incorruptible by power, and which have preserved their simplicity, unhurt by the atmosphere of dissimulation in which they live, and uninjured even by the blaze of their own reputations. If ever the famous antithesis in the epitaph on Gay, was applicable to any other person, it surely was to him.*

The task, therefore, undertaken by Herbert, was, as we have said, of little or no difficulty; and the few minutes required for this perfect reconciliation, recalled to his mind the observation which Sir William Temple made with so much happiness on the ease with which he had effected the triple alliance, that it was difficult

* "In wit a man, simplicity a child."

to draw things out of their centre, but to make them return, Nature helps so far "that there needs no more than just to set them a going."

Herbert, therefore, was prepared with a happy greeting for his friend, on his return from his voyage of electioneering discovery—so happy, that it soothed some at least of the mental wounds which De Vere had sustained in his endeavours to sound the depths of political friendships, and the gratitude of an ambitious *parvenu*.

The contempt with which the whole transaction concerning the seat, together with all the actors in it, were viewed by Mr. Wentworth, and the virtuous indignation excited in his mind, by the conduct of Lord Oldcastle, only attached De Vere more and more to his person. And, as De Vere's attachments or resentments were the last things he made any attempt to conceal, he was every where set down as having enlisted in the party of Opposition, of which Mr. Wentworth was expected to become the active and distinguished leader.

This was immediately turned against him by his former friends, and most efficiently, though most secretly, by Clayton, whose cause it served. De Vere was every where represented, upon the hints furnished by the *parvenu*, as a renegado to his family and his party, and, what was worse, from motives of resentment and self-interest, because he had failed in his views on a particular diplomatic mission, which he had *solicited*.

This report was called in his own warm language, by Mr. Wentworth himself, when he had occasion to allude to it in the House, a calumny as false and pitiful as the breast in which it originated,—an observation which immediately drove the *parvenu* from behind the Treasury bench, to the last seat under the gallery, whence he did not stir that night.

Nevertheless, the report, false as it was, served for a while the turn intended. It diverted the world from any keen inquiry into the affair of the seat; which, for the most part, it was supposed Mr. Clayton had been obliged to hold against his will, by the absolute command of Lord Mowbray, who had family claims upon

it. These claims, it was said, he had been driven to assert, in consequence of the fickle and self-interested conduct of his nephew, who, from disappointed vanity in not being duly appreciated by the Premier, had thrown himself into the arms of the Ex-Minister, and thus joined the Opposition, only because he could not form a part of the government.

Few people inquired farther; and no wonder, therefore, if the greater part of the world thought that Lord Mowbray was only right in defending himself against the rebellion and ingratitude of his nephew, and pitied poor good Clayton, who was not allowed to vacate the seat as he wished, but was a martyr to his difficulties in acting between his early friend, and his powerful patron.

And thus it fares sometimes in the world; and thus are the world's children often permitted to circumvent and triumph over those of a far higher cast of character. It was such fatality no doubt that made the master of nature break out in that fearful prophecy,

"Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny."

The consequence was all he wished to the prosperous Mr. Clayton,—who thus contrived to enlist Lord Mowbray and the Minister himself, against the object of his treachery, and who gave himself the air of a resigned, but ill-used person. In the latter he was joined by Lords Cleveland and Eustace; who, from their former intimacy with De Vere, were at least supposed to understand the affair, and who, having without inquiry persuaded themselves, easily persuaded others, that De Vere's conduct in the separation that took place, had been the effect of disappointed pride; their own, of self-defence.

The consequence was a rupture in form. They passed De Vere without speaking in the streets; talked of him as a man who had ruined his own hopes, and were treated by him in return with coldness and disdain.

Injury, however, did not make him unjust. Those who knew the history of Clayton, and who themselves

hated him for his arrogance, did not now check their hostility towards him in the presence of De Vere, some of them thinking even to make themselves agreeable to him, by indulging their own resentment against the private Secretary. But De Vere refused this unction to his supposed cause of complaint. Once, in a mixed company, a talking man, meaning to please him by it, used the phrase "his shameful ingratitude towards you." "Permit me to stop you," said De Vere. "As I have never complained, no one has a right to impute to him wrongs towards me, which I do not impute myself."

In this high tone of independence, though his hopes seemed blasted, De Vere still presented himself to the world, nor ever lost that dauntless front of integrity, which an unsuccessful, if a weak man, sometimes permits to be ravished from him, but of which no man of spirit can ever be deprived.

But the world was changed to him. His fortune did not suffice for his rank; his advancement was evidently stopped; and his parliamentary views, for a long time, if not for ever, extinguished.

How different this, from the high and rising young man of great expectations, who, from his family interest, and personal character, was to achieve whatever he pleased.

Oh! the folly of a rash, hot-headed youth, who, courted by fortune, throws himself away! Such he was judged now by the world, for such he had been openly represented by the successful party. While on the other hand, the cautious and never erring prudence of the low-born Clayton, had reaped their reward, in the actual advancement he enjoyed, and the great views which opened to him for the future. All his machinations had succeeded; and thus it might be said, when the situation of the two men were compared,

> "An eagle towering in his pride of place,
> Was, by a mousing owl, hawk'd at and kill'd."

CHAPTER XVIII.

A REPULSE.

Alas! thrice gentle Cassio,
My advocation is not now in tune;
My lord is not my lord, nor should I know him,
Were he in favour, as in humour altered.

SHAKSPEARE.

AND was the Lady Constance silent or indifferent at the depression of her cousin? We have failed in our delineation of her mind, if it can be thought that she was. In fact, she pushed remonstrance as far as she dared, with an indulgent father, upon the usage of De Vere at the borough. Lord Mowbray, with evident uneasiness, told her, as usual, that a woman could know nothing of these matters, and that it was even incompatible with her delicacy to meddle with them. She allowed it might be out of her province, but offered to furnish demonstrative proof that the whole was a conspiracy between Clayton and Blakeney, to destroy De Vere, and profit by his spoils.

Lord Mowbray had been prepared for this by Clayton, who had asked and obtained the protection of his patron against what he called an intriguing woman, in the person of Miss Mellilot. Her influence with her lady, he said, he dreaded, particularly as she represented the party adverse to what he now openly called (and was not checked for it) the Mowbray interest in the borough. In return, Lord Mowbray thought he could do no less than support his zealous protégé against all intriguing persons whatever. Nothing therefore could be so unwelcome as this attempt of Constance to alter the face of affairs in the borough; which, he said, were, upon the whole, as smooth as could be expected, and which it might be dangerous to change.

The Lord Mowbray was a man of maxims, and among many which he was fond of quoting (not always with too great anxiety for the correctness of their application,) "Stare super antiquas vias," or, as

he translated it, "Let things alone," was as much his favourite, as the word "innovation" had always been his terror. This maxim he did not fail particularly to inculcate, now that it served him as an answer sufficient, he thought, to an attempt on his daughter's part which was most unwelcome.

"And yet," said Constance, with gentle perseverance, "Mr. Clayton did not remember this maxim, when, for the first time these hundred years, an interest was set up in the place, adverse to my uncle's family, though favourable, he says, to ours."

"Lady Constance," said Lord Mowbray, with anger on his brows; "you know nothing of what you are saying; nothing of the real state of things; and, in particular, nothing of politics."

"But I hope, my dear father," replied she, "I can distinguish what is wrong in a dark affair, and may be allowed to bring it to light. I hope, too, I may be permitted to feel for an injured relation, who has been sacrificed to a dishonest scheme of advancement by a treacherous friend."

Lord Mowbray now waxed wroth, and, assuming all the dignity of which he was capable, "If you mean," said he, "Mr. Clayton, by your most unjustifiable innuendo, he is the injured party, you the injuring; for he has done all in his power with me to permit him to lay down the seat, in the fear of this very surmise. And this I tell you, to show you how incompetent as well as indelicate a young lady is, when she travels out of her sphere to meddle with what does not belong to her. My nephew is, I am sorry to say, an overbearing and impracticable person, and he has used Mr. Clayton ill by his suspicions; though Mr. Clayton returns nothing but meekness for his affronts."

Constance thought of the meekness of the wolf, and would have continued to sue for inquiry in favour of her cousin. But it was the suing of Desdemona for Cassio, when the mind of Othello had been poisoned. Nay, her perseverance, though modestly firm, and set off by reasoning, only inflamed her father more, in proportion to the little reasoning he had to oppose to it; till at length he lost all power of reply, and for the

first time in his life, commanded her from his presence.

The effect of this upon a gentle heart, which had never yet received a check from any one, much less from a person it loved, was calamitous to the happiness of Constance. Though there was nothing in Lord Mowbray to command any very high respect for his character, even in his child; still he had ever been as indulgent to her, as a cold and stiff nature would permit. He was proud of her as a daughter, and showed his pride by acts of such apparent kindness, that her affection was easily won. She opened not her eyes to her father's defects, but gave him as much dutiful love as a man of much higher wrought feelings could have desired. She was therefore seriously and grievously wounded by the severe repulse she had just sustained.

It was the hour of dressing—her toilette was spread, and its *recherche* would have brought Belinda and all her sylphs to the mind of any one who viewed it. Miss Mellilot was, indeed, the only visible sylph in waiting, and had spent a most agreeable half hour while expecting her lady, in admiring the rich dress which she had intended that evening to wear, at a grand ball given by Lady Clanellan. What was her surprise when her lady entered, with a pensive and melancholy countenance, which she did not even attempt to conceal. Miss Mellilot, to her astonishment, and not much to her pleasure, was, for a time, dismissed, and when summoned again, instead of orders to begin the charming process of dressing, (in which the maid sometimes takes as much pleasure as the mistress,) she received a note, with directions to send it instantly by a footman to Lady Clanellan. 'Twas an excuse from the ball; and Lord Mowbray dining out, Constance spent the whole evening alone.

At first she intended to pass it in reading. But the books she opened were De la Rochefoucauld and La Bruyère, and these gave her no pleasure; for she was too little in humour with mankind much to disagree with them, and their views were not so favourable as to restore happiness to her reflections on the world, supposing these to have been what principally occupied

her. But her fears of having offended her father, and that she might, as he said, have exceeded the delicacy of her sex in interfering between two gentlemen, were the real causes of her distress. She could not bear to think that she had departed from the modest dignity of a woman, in thus invading, as Lord Mowbray charged her with doing, the province of men. And her sense of duty to a parent was, at any rate, such, that to have excited his anger, who never before had been even displeased with her, not only dismayed but weighed down her heart. It was a heart which, however buoyant of late with excitement, was formed to find happiness only in the fulfilment of duty and the cultivation of affection. At the same time, the zealousness of her nature, where justice was so outraged and hypocrisy had been allowed such a triumph, hardly permitted her to think she had been wrong. She had offered to her father true information,—the only thing she supposed he could need to make him interfere with a high hand, where common right seemed so much to demand it. And if to this common right she added, without knowing it, a little more than common interest for the person most concerned, it derogated nothing from the sincerity of her feelings. The feeling would have been the same in quality, though, perhaps, not in degree, had an unknown person been the injured party,—of such elements was this generous girl composed.

As it was, she was plunged in affliction; and her distress at Lord Mowbray's displeasure, was not relieved by general meditations on the falsehood of worldly friendships, the success sometimes of the designing over the single of heart, the inanity of ambition, or the inefficacy of gaiety to produce happiness.

These reflections lasted deep into the night; nor could Constance lie down till she had, in an affectionate and submissive billet, expressed her concern at having displeased her father,—whose forgiveness she asked in terms as if her offence had been of a far more serious kind.—Yet, for all this, she was anxious, and even unhappy, and rose at the earliest dawn to behold through her unclosed windows, the colours which be-

gan, though faintly, to crimson the east. The birds were already busy in the gardens of the square, and the budding green of the foliage was fresh and cheering. "It is spring," said she, "and we shall soon leave this tumultuous life, so different from all that it promised."

It would be doing Lord Mowbray injustice to say he was not softened by his daughter's contrition. It flattered his self-consequence to receive excuses, and hear pardon begged, by one of whom he was so proud. He had secretly felt too, that he had himself been in the wrong; and the whole affair of the borough was of too equivocal a nature, even to himself, to give him much desire to sift what, if left in obscurity, would also leave him in convenient ignorance. The submission of Constance was therefore, on every account, as gladdening to *his* heart as his ready forgiveness was comfortable to *her's*. She had, however, still one step farther to go, before she could be satisfied.

Of all her virtues, perhaps the purest was the perfect candour of her mind, which felt concealment as it would disgrace. To fear a disclosure was an insupportable bondage to her; and she was therefore not easy till she had herself made a confession, that she had not discouraged her woman Mellilot, from acquainting her with the particulars with which she was supplied by her brother. And she farther informed him, of her own consequent intimation to her cousin, to beware of Blakeney.

Lord Mowbray received this account with more surprise than pleasure; but he had been too recently mollified by her submissions, to relapse into anger. Contenting himself, therefore, with exacting a promise from her, never again to invade the province of men "by interfering in politics," (which was favourite language of his,) he gave her all she wanted, an assurance that she was completely restored to his affection. It followed, however, that what she had promised, was not to be performed by halves; and she took the very first opportunity of being alone with Miss, (or rather Mrs. Mellilot, as she was called,) to forbid her making any farther communications of the affairs of the borough.

Thus, to the astonishment, and we may add consternation, of that *talented* young lady, her mistress seemed to abandon the place, and, what is more, her cousin's interest in it, to the enemy.

CHAPTER XIX.

EARLY RECOLLECTIONS.

Give sorrow words; the grief that will not speak
Whispers the o'erfraught heart, and bids it break.
SHAKSPEARE.

It may be supposed that what had weighed so heavily upon the mind of Constance, was not withheld from her aunt, or her friend Lady Clanellan. One part, indeed, of the constitution of our nature is, for the most amiable purposes, so ordered, that the communication whether of grief or joy to a person we love, assuages the one and brightens the other.

Constance had no grief, but she had troubles; and, while all the world supposed she was the queen of pleasure as of fashion, and adored her as such with boundless devotion, she was internally, to her own astonishment, fatigued in spirit, and unsatisfied in mind.

"What a gay life is yours!" said a young friend to her one day, while every one was admiring her; "what a light heart!" The observation immediately banished the smile that had prompted it; for, as she afterwards told Lady Clanellan, she had smiled at nothing, and her heart at that very moment was as heavy as lead.

"You are a most extraordinary girl," said Lady Clanellan, "and could the world see into that little mind of yours, you would be set down either as having lost your senses, or as never having had any to lose."

"The world would be but right," observed Constance.

"A fit of sentiment," continued Lady Clanellan," "comes over you, because you are afraid of papa, and in consequence you refuse to come to my ball, which was given almost on purpose for you. There were I don't know how many peers of England, counts of France, and princes of the Holy Roman Empire, all watching the door for your arrival, and all going away angry with me for their disappointment. Do you think I can forgive this?"

"My dear Marchioness, if you knew——"

"If I knew what? I am sure I know enough. There is a Duke on his knees, or who would be so to you, every day of his life, if you would let him; yet you turn away with almost disdain. There is a magnificent earl, who says you are as cold as a lump of ice, and would be fit only for a milk-maid, even if you were warmer. There is a——"

"My dear kind friend," interrupted Constance, "spare me, I beseech you! I am not in spirits for raillery."

"And what are you in spirits for?" replied the Marchioness, changing her tone, and kissing her cheek; "Is there any thing in this little heart of yours which is pent up, and wants relief? If there is, why let it show itself, and we will see what can be done to give it ease. Believe me, dear Constance, to see *you* grave makes *me* melancholy; for if you were really unhappy, I could never be at ease But confidence, where you can so repose it, will relieve you much."

"I am sure it will," answered Constance, leaning her head on her friend's shoulder; "but I have really nothing to confide, except what will perhaps surprise you as much as it does myself—that I was happier in Languedoc than I have ever been since we left it."

"What!" replied Lady Clanellan, "in those formal old gardens of Esparbez; with nobody to speak to but a stiff President or two of the Parliament of Toulouse, or an old General des Armées du Roi?"

"I had you, and Lord Clanellan," said Constance.

"And a pretty couple we were!" returned the Marchioness: "I an invalid, and he little better than a farmer who knew how to read; which was more than we could say of all our neighbours."

"With all this, I was happy," said Constance.

"And not now?"

"Alas! no; and what is worse, I cannot tell why. I seem to have a fever on my spirits."

"Yet, if flattery could sooth——"

"Alas! it makes me sick. I am insulted with compliments all day long. I am deified in prose and verse, by persons who know nothing of me, and whose praise would be of no value if they did. I am dragged, or drag myself, from one show to another, where the eye is excited by dazzling brilliancy, but without one satisfying thought to accompany it. In short, there is no mind any where in those about me: all is masquerade: and I hate the name of masquerade, since that unfortunate one at Bellamont House."

Lady Clanellan, who knew and respected the deep impression which the adventure there had made upon Constance, and had done all she could to heal a spirit hurt to the quick by the liberties which had been taken with her, now desisted from her rallying tone, and in the gentlest manner asked her if she had any thing on her mind.

"Not positively," said Constance; "but I am too little pleased with my life to be at ease. As to what I do in public, I feel myself a mere puppet of fashion, and, what is worse, sought after as a mere instrument of party politics. Yet I feel only humbled by being thought a party woman—no very amiable character in itself; and one who, before she can shine, must learn to be at least an actress, if not to forget her sex."

"That will my Constance never do," said Lady Clanellan kindly; "but you have your own private moments, your own private thoughts and resources, and surely never was any young person so entirely her own mistress."

"Nothing so seemingly true, so really false," replied Constance. "The silly flattery I meet with would make me think myself a queen—the constraints of my life show me I am a slave. How different from this was even that old chateau of Esparbez, which you pretend to ridicule, but which yet you liked."

"Strange," said Lady Clanellan, laughing, "that

so gay an heiress should even remember such a piece of monotony!"

"I have told you I am not gay," replied Constance, gravely; "and very sure I am, to be an heiress, is not in itself to be happy. Then, as to monotony, I begin to doubt, however you may laugh at me, whether it is not capable of yielding more real contentment, than the most splendid variety."

"You, who have so much experience," said the Marchioness, still smiling at her, "must be right."

"And have I not experience?" returned Constance. "Was I not happy at Esparbez, and—am I happy here? As to the monotony of Esparbez, while it was giving *you* health, what did I require? But it also gave me, what is so good for every one, but particularly a wild young girl, such as I then was, the habit which you, dear Marchioness, so kindly fostered, of making home happy, by turning the most trivial things into lessons of instruction. While this prevailed, how did the hours fly!"

"Dear Constance," said the Marchioness, changing to seriousness, "I remember full well how my Lord and I admired you, for taking so rationally to that solitude, and dispelling all its gloom by the sunshine of your own mind. Yet you were then as unknown to the world, and as ignorant of it, as your own doves of which you were so fond. How does it happen that things are so changed?"

"It was this very ignorance, I believe," replied Constance, "that made me happy. The doves you mention, had not a wish beyond their cage, nor I beyond mine. The little studies, in which you and Lord Clanellan engaged me, improved me, or, what is the same thing, made me hope I was improving. This was every thing: for though there was no variety but what we made for ourselves, every little diversion which we did make, became an episode of pleasure. Such was the mere raising of a primrose, or even a salad in my own garden; but particularly a ride in the evening in that sweet climate, while Lord Clanellan drove you in his calash: and then to return to a home where every thing was void of care, and the birds sung me to sleep——"

"*Fi donc,*" interrupted the Marchioness; "what would be said of you at the court ball to-night, if this were overheard?"

"*Fi donc,* or not," replied Constance, "I can safely say, that in spite of all I am envied for, I have neither been so happy, nor, I am afraid, so innocent, since the days we have been calling to mind."

Strange to say, the eyes of Constance, and a deep sigh which she breathed, showed how much she was moved by these unfashionable recollections.

"Nay, now!" exclaimed Lady Clanellan; "I shall begin to scold, or send for Lord Cleveland to quiz your pretty simplicity. For Heaven's sake! dear Constance, wherein have you departed from the innocence I have always loved in you, as your brightest jewel?"

"In the total loss of my time," replied Constance; "in appearing always as if upon a scene; in letting hour after hour go by without one self-approving action, or even thought. How different from this, when I used to quit your bedside of an evening, at that peaceful Esparbez, happy to think that my little nursing had made you feel easier, and that the return of health would soon be at hand."

"My dearest Constance," said the Marchioness, now in her turn greatly affected, "how can I ever love you sufficiently for all this, or tell you, notwithstanding my raillery, how I join in your recollections of that dear old place, where the recovery of health set off every thing with delight, and all that we said or did, seemed a feast of love."

At these words, these two amiable women embraced, nor did the difference of their ages seem to make any difference in the affection with which they regarded each other, or in the feeling which the remembrance of the old scenes of their happiness together had called forth. Indeed, there was always something in the manner and looks of Lady Clanellan, that shed a charm over every thing she said or did, and banished every notion of age. The *fond* of her character was a most serious rectitude, which might have been called severe, but that all appearance of severity was softened, if not lost, in the cheerful nature of her good-

ness. Hence, she was always surrounded by young people, who gave their hearts to her as to one of their own age, and few were the secrets they could conceal from her. Her great love for Constance, therefore, made her seriously anxious to trace out (which she knew she could easily do,) whether any thing really lay at her heart. But except that that heart had a void in it, which not all her splendid occupations, all her brilliant pleasures, nay, even her friends and admirers, could fill, and that this void created languor, self-blame, and indifference to every thing that surrounded her—the Marchioness could discover little real disease of mind.

Yet with so much goodness, so many accomplishments, so much aptitude for natural happiness, and with all the appliances of the world to boot,—that the world should fail in satisfying her, both moved, and baffled conjecture. At the same time, the Marchioness observed that by far the most preponderating interest with Constance, was the conduct of her father, in allowing Clayton to unseat her cousin Mortimer.

This was, in fact, the original cause of her distress, from its having drawn down the displeasure of Lord Mowbray, and excited her fears that she had departed from her duty as a daughter, and, perhaps, even from the *retenue* of a delicate woman. In this, therefore, she required all the assurances of her friend that she had not overstepped decorum or the duty of her situation. She, indeed, could hardly accept the unhesitating approbation which the Marchioness bestowed upon her endeavour to defeat what she called the scandalous conspiracy of Clayton to defraud an honourable man of his right; and she compromised the matter by averring that, as she interfered only from the supposition that Clayton could not be approved by Lord Mowbray, so she must now suppose herself wrong, and abandon her cousin altogether.

Lady Clanellan, however she might lament the circumstance, could not but applaud her rectitude; and with this assurance, little consoling as it was, this soft-minded girl took leave of the subject, and of her friend, to dress herself in smiles, and preside at a dinner of twenty covers.

Here her fine manners made their usual impression, and she was set down, even by the serious, as a glass in which all young women might dress themselves; by the careless as a high-fortuned mortal, who could not have a care. And thus we might see confirmed the moral thought of a quaint old strain.

"Though with forced mirth we oft may soothe a smart,
What seemeth well may not be well, I ween;
For many an aching mind and burning heart,
Hid under guise of mirth is often seen."

CHAPTER XX.

A DUEL.

The noble Brutus
Hath told you Cæsar was ambitious:
If it were so, it were a grievous fault,
And grievously hath Cæsar answered it.
SHAKSPEARE.

WHILE what we have just related was going on in the little world of thought which constituted the mind of Constance, an awful event happened in the greater world that surrounded her, which fixed the public attention, plunged many into grief, and afforded a fearful lesson to all.

Among the few friends who did not desert Mr. Wentworth on the late changes, was a person of whom, though we have had no occasion hitherto to mention him, the nation had on a variety of accounts conceived the highest hopes. Son of a man, in family and fortune of the first consequence in the state, and thus favoured by birth and wealth, he was equally favoured by nature from his genius and attainments. He had the gift of eloquence superior to all his contemporaries save Wentworth alone; and his high heart, though touched strongly with ambition, was filled with sincerity, and also with a sensibility, which was always ready to overflow.

These qualities, however, strange as it may seem, betrayed him sometimes into what, in the minds even of persons far his inferiors, gave an air of weakness to some parts of his conduct: for he more than once had been made the victim of an overweening confidence in men whom he had trusted, but who proved not trustworthy; and his sensibility was so keen to every thing, right or wrong, which could affect his reputation, that his fancy often conjured up spectres, appalling to his happiness. On such occasions, he was, unfortunately, so hasty that no one could answer for consequences. These were his faults, and dearly did he answer them.

The English, however, of all nations on earth, are calculated to love and adopt such a character as their own; and, accordingly, from his first entry into public life, Mr. Beaufort inspired his countrymen with the warmest interest for his success, and the firmest reliance upon his patriotism.

Nor were they wrong, for had there been a question between the interests of his country and his own, even had his life been the alternative, he would not have hesitated which to prefer.

To De Vere's great delight, there reigned the purest harmony between this gentleman and Mr. Wentworth. Their admiration was mutual, and no jealousy had hitherto sprung up, like a mildewed ear, to blast their hopeful alliance. Mr. Beaufort, with all his ambition, and distinguished as he was, had willingly submitted to the higher fortune of his friend, and successfully fought under him as his lieutenant, with a loyalty that was unblemished.

We may suppose, that to a minister of Lord Oldcastle's penetration, the acquisition of such a man, when he had determined to separate from his former colleague, was every way of the highest consequence. Of value as a support to himself, to detach him from being the support of his antagonist became of tenfold importance; and accordingly, no attempt was left untried to obtain him. But Mr. Beaufort was above all the temptations of power or wealth which Lord Oldcastle could offer. Both his principles and his engage-

ments devoted him to the Ex-Minister. He had attended the meeting at Mowbray House, and that he had done so, was all the answer he condescended to give Lord Oldcastle, when the latter applied to him in person, or through the numerous agents, direct and indirect, whom he afterwards employed. Happy had Beaufort been equally firm against the sway of all other feelings and mistaken notions, as he was against temptations which applied themselves only to his interest.

Mr. Wentworth, at this time particularly, had distinguished himself upon one of those questions involving the personal character and conduct of the actors concerned, which, whenever they occur, excite the feeling and interest of the nation to an absorbing degree.

After developing, with warm indignation, the intrigues to which he would not stoop, but to which, he said, he had fallen a sacrifice, he unmasked the views of his opponents, particularly of the Minister himself, with a force of honest invective which made them tremble; and he drew a comparison between *them*, in their success from such arts, and *himself*, in his failure from the want of them, which left them in possession of no superiority over him in the minds of his auditors.

But he gained all hearts when he wound up with a dignified and philosophic description of the sort of ambition he courted, and the fortune which alone he followed; welcome, he said, if virtuously attained; despised, if offered at the expense of virtue. This sentiment he classically clothed in a beautiful passage from his favourite author, with which, when he closed his speech, he seemed to electrify the House:—

"Laudo manentem; si celeres quatit
Pennas, resigno quæ dedit, et mea
Virtute me involvo, probamque
Pauperiem sine dote quæro."*

* Thus given by Francis, speaking of Fortune:—

"I can applaud her while she stays;
But if she shake her rapid wings,
I can resign, with careless ease,
The richest gifts her favour brings;
Then folded lie in Virtue's arms,
And honest Poverty's undowered charms."

The eloquence of this harangue, particularly of the last sentiment, was cheered by all Mr. Wentworth's hearers; by none more than by the enthusiastic Beaufort. Alas! it was the last cheer he ever gave.

Mr. Wentworth's party had already visibly increased; and the high ground which Lord Oldcastle had taken, seemed, insensibly to others, but obviously to himself, to be slipping from under him. With all his talents, he was not a bold politician, and he felt it was absolutely necessary either to create jealousies in the opposite party, so as to disunite their strength, or to abandon his post to Wentworth, who he knew would accept of no office under him. To gain Beaufort alone, had been tried in vain; to gain him as the chief of a party, with Wentworth under him, might yet be attempted. To an extended offer, including Wentworth himself, he might listen without loss of honour: if accepted, a ground for discontent was laid; if rejected, jealousy would still, probably, be the consequence. A messenger was therefore sent to Beaufort in form, to desire a meeting, to consider of a new government, and, as was added, by command of him who had a right to command it. In this, the object of the Premier was refined beyond all ordinary rules. He knew that to exclude Wentworth would be unavailing; but he might lower him, which would almost equally answer his purpose. Wentworth, the immoveable, the proud, the aspiring CHIEF, was the object of all Lord Oldcastle's fear; but the lieutenant of another, he would instantly be degraded, and probably disarmed. He therefore resolved to try the effect of an offer to Beaufort, even to the extent of one half of the government, *without* the excluding clause as to Wentworth, which had hitherto made all attempts abortive. The only stipulation, therefore, which he resolved to make, was, that the treaty should be conducted by Beaufort alone, and as a necessary consequence, that Beaufort should be considered by the Minister as the ostensible chief of his party. If this were accepted, there was no office which Lord Oldcastle was not willing that Mr. Beaufort should offer to his friend. Such was the Italian policy intended to be pursued in negociating a union.

On the receipt of the message, which simply, as we have said, desired a meeting, Beaufort instantly communicated with Wentworth, who told him that under the circumstances he could not but comply.

"It is useless," said Beaufort; "to separate us is impossible."

"I know it," returned Wentworth, "but the terms may have been altered; besides there is a high recommendation, which must not be disobeyed."

Beaufort complied, assuring Wentworth that he was but an agent to hear, but not to determine; and never did the friends honour or confide in one another more than when they separated.

On meeting, the wary Minister was most adroit as to his object. All notion of severing Beaufort from his party was abandoned, and pardon even begged for former attempts to overcome, what was still treated as a *prejudice* that stood in the way of *duty;* but though a prejudice, an honourable one. This being set at rest, even the *uti possidetis* was also abandoned by Lord Oldcastle.

"I feel," said Lord Oldcastle, "that the country is every thing, and I should little honour myself, if any ambition of mine stood in the way of an advantageous arrangement. I am, therefore, even prepared to quit my present station, if that should be deemed necessary for his Majesty's service."

The frank mind of Beaufort was struck with the proof of disinterestedness which this seemed to give; and, in the simplicity of his heart, he complimented the Premier on the purity of his patriotism, which could thus yield his power to a rival, for the sake of the public weal.

"Stop," said Lord Oldcastle, with a mixture of dignity and candour, "nor give me more credit than I deserve. Though I said I should little honour myself, if an obstinacy in retaining my present situation were to stand in the way of a proper arrangement, it follows not that I should *dishonour* myself to procure it."

Beaufort expressing his wonder at the meaning of this, the Lord Oldcastle went on.

"Forgive me, Mr. Beaufort, if I feel I have a right to some personal pride, as well as Mr. Wentworth. His would be wounded, it seems, were he to serve under me; would mine then be unhurt were I to serve under *him? I* have already been placed at the head, by our common sovereign; *he* has not yet been so honoured. If the country require it now, I am ready to retire; but it follows not that I am to be called upon to serve *under* one who has almost refused to acknowledge me even as an equal. Still this need not prevent what we all so much desire; it will only be necessary that I and my friends should withdraw from power altogether, and leave Mr. Wentworth to form a government as well as he can."

He said this with an air of generous self-sacrifice; but to a less unsuspecting observer than Beaufort, something sardonic might perhaps have been discovered lurking in the corner of his lip, when he pronounced the words *as well as he can.*

Be this as it may, Beaufort was embarrassed at the intimation; as the secession of Lord Oldcastle and his friends would leave the government weaker, even in the hands of Wentworth, than it was at the then actual crisis. It became necessary, therefore, to ask whether Lord Oldcastle, by *retiring*, meant to deny his support to any new government that might be formed?

"As to that," replied the wary politician, "I can only say it must depend upon circumstances that may arise. For though I am not one of those who would drive headlong into opposition as a thing of course, because I had laid down my power; yet, even though I might promise a *general* support, who can see into futurity?"

The candour of Beaufort could not but admit this; and his confiding nature, little practised in the wiles, or even the language of party, almost tempted him to think that these professions of Lord Oldcastle might satisfy his friend. Being pushed to it too, by the penetrating Minister,—who saw that his sense of honour had been touched by what he had said,—Beaufort acknowledged that it might be too much to expect Lord Oldcastle to quit the post of Prime Minister, and take

office under a man who had refused to serve under *him;* and such was his dilemma, that he was preparing to break up the conference, when Lord Oldcastle, observing that he had sufficiently excited his fears for the country, as well as his sense of contending difficulties, now brought forward a *mezzo termino.*

"Come," said Lord Oldcastle, "though it is clear that I cannot serve under Mr. Wentworth, nor he under *me*, why should we not both serve under a third person?"

"To find him!" said Beaufort, much surprised, and rather thrown off his guard.

"Yourself!" cried Lord Oldcastle.

"Impossible!"

"And why so? You have great family connexions; great abilities; great command in debate; much popularity. There can be no objection, therefore, in those who might reject one another, to own you as chief."

Beaufort felt astounded; he drew his breath quick; he thought of Wentworth; thought of the country; and, as a momentary flush crimsoned his cheek, Lord Oldcastle believed he saw hesitation on his brow.

"Mr. Wentworth may have his choice of offices," said Lord Oldcastle, "provided only that he is not *first.* And to give more strength and dignity still to your own part of the arrangements, an elevation in the peerage to your father, might perhaps, by giving you title, though not intrinsically necessary, add an ornament at least to the real strength of the union."

It would be wronging the truth to say that the ambition of Beaufort was not flattered by all this; though he never departed one instant from his prevailing wish to see Wentworth in power, not only influencing, but directing the destinies of his country. Of this he felt there was not a chance, while Lord Oldcastle continued where he was; and as little, should the latter be moved, without coalescing with the Wentworth party. He could have wished some other third person had been named as chief, and actually did name more than one, but they were all objected to by Lord Oldcastle, either as deficient in court interest, in abilities, or in extensive connexions. "In short," said my Lord, "*aut*

Cæsar, aut nullus. It is for you to say whether you will refuse to save the country, where you can do it so easily."

The excitement of Beaufort's mind was not allayed by these topics. He was sincerely patriotic; sincerely loyal to Wentworth; and sincerely ready to spurn all personal advantages at the expense of honour. But he was ambitious; and he saw no sacrifice of honour in consenting to be at least the bearer of these proposals to his friend and to his party, with a view to *consult* them.—This was all he promised, and this he performed.

The astonishment of Wentworth, when he heard the result of the conference, is not to be painted. We have described him as subject to momentary starts of suspicion and anger, during which his invectives were terrible; upon the present occasion they were uncontrollable, when he found that his friend had even listened to a plan which he called insidious, and, to a most offensive degree, degrading to himself; and though he was too just to Beaufort to accuse him of any treachery in hearing it, yet the very thought that he had not rejected with scorn and contempt, what he called an evident design (so evident that a baby might see through it) to lower him (Wentworth), surprised Beaufort into a vehemence that carried torture and death to his sensibility, which we have described as so irritable.

"I will not," said Wentworth, "glance at the palpable snares laid for your own ambition, at the small price of my degradation; I will not inquire into the reasons which prevented you from seeing through such treachery."

"Stop!" interrupted Beaufort, with emotions which were unbearable; "nor glance, on your part, at what it tears my soul to pieces to think you could imagine."

"I imagine nothing against your honour," cried Wentworth. But it was too late for explanation: horror had seized upon the soul of Beaufort; the too sensate jealousy in regard to his character, which has been mentioned, had now got complete hold of him; and,

in a tremor which seemed to proceed from a breaking heart, he burst from the house to seek his own home. There, after ordering the doors to be closed against all visitors, he buried himself in his chamber.

The whole passed so quickly, that this sudden movement could not be prevented; and Wentworth was content to remain a full hour by himself, ruminating over the new aspect of things; during which he repented him of his vehemence towards his friend, for whose return, or at least for some tidings from him, he began anxiously to wish. But his friend came not, and the amiable, though warm-tempered Wentworth, with an appeased spirit, and a desire to atone for his offensive and unintentional expressions, sallied forth to seek the friend he feared he had injured.

What was his surprise, and, we may add, his alarm, when he was not only refused admittance, but fairly told by the porter, that it was his master's last order that he should be refused particularly to *him*.

"I would not be so bold as to tell you, Sir, said the porter, "but for fear there be something wrong between two such good gentlemen; for, indeed, Sir, my master seems quite desperate."

Wentworth, in alarm, repeated the attempt that night, and again the next day, but in vain; nor did they see each other till they met in the House; when the high-wrought resentment of Beaufort was so great, that the advances of his friend (who still continued to make them) were proudly and moodily rejected.

This did not escape observation amongst those who were most interested to observe; for it had already been whispered that Lord Oldcastle had made overtures to Mr Beaufort, which had been accepted, and that a quarrel had been the consequence between him and his former friend. The rumour seemed thus too fully confirmed, and both sides were fixed in most exciting attention towards the behaviour of the two leaders. Agreeably to all practice, particularly in party, every thing was at once taken for granted on either side. The Ministerialists openly boasted that Beaufort had agreed to their terms. They named his very office and title, and assumed an air and tone of confidence

upon it, which made universal impression. On the other hand, Mr. Wentworth's party, discomfited and imposed upon by what they felt would be a severe blow to their reputation, as well as interest, and confirmed in their suspicions by the cold and resentful conduct of Beaufort, could no longer restrain their indignation. They showed it by shunning him, and forming themselves into groups to hold conversations, of which it was evident to himself that he was the subject. This maddened him still more; and though he would not retire from the House, fearing that it might confirm the suspicions, which could not now be concealed from him, he was evidently ripe for any catastrophe, and ready to lay down his life rather than suffer the supposition that his honour had been sullied.

Wentworth saw all this, and implored him, through a friend, to retire with him, thinking that by soothing and explanation, he might restore him to himself. But no! the unfortunate Beaufort only became the more infuriated. "It is to you," said he, "that I owe the destruction which has overtaken me: it is you, my friend, in whose cause I was employed, who have ruined my fame; and on you be my blood, if it be necessary to shed it."

What this particularly meant did not appear; but Wentworth, knowing his friend's sensibility, shuddered with fear, and as Beaufort would not suffer him to approach him, he fondly hoped that could the night pass over in peace, the next morning might see all things restored.

It unfortunately happened, that there was at that instant before the House one of those propositions upon the general state of affairs, which peculiarly admitted of an inquiry into this too interesting case; and the question was flatly, and with no delicacy, put by a pragmatical, smattering sort of man, who sought to give himself consequence by it, "whether the rumours they had heard in the morning were true." Those to whom it was addressed, asked what rumours? "Whether an honourable gentleman," he replied, (designating Beaufort,) "had agreed to accept a great office and a

title." "I rise to anticipate the answer," cried Beaufort, in an agony, amounting almost to phrensy. "I declare the report to be false; foully and slanderously false; and those who have promulgated such scandal are the assassins of a character which they cannot openly assail. I have agreed to no terms whatever."

"Then he at least listened to proposals," observed the member who asked the question.

"No man," replied Beaufort with indignation, "can prevent even the most insidious proposals from being made to him: and I desire distinctly and explicitly to declare, that although attempts were made to detach me from my politics, I repressed them all with the scorn they deserved."

This called up a gentleman high in office, and known to be in the confidence of Lord Oldcastle. He was a man bold, rough, and determined, yet cool and wily in conduct, and both from temper and a most aspiring ambition, he desired nothing better for his own purposes, than to signalize himself against the hottest leaders of the opposition. "We do not sit here, Sir," said he to the speaker, "to be *scorned;* and since the gentleman professes so much contempt for us, it is fit I should declare I have reason to believe that within these four-and-twenty hours his conduct has by no means tallied with his present professions."

Great cries of "order, order," but accompanied with greater cheering from the ministerial benches, followed this denunciation. It was answered from the other side with equal determination, and the speaker in vain for two minutes endeavoured to restore tranquillity, during which two minutes both Beaufort and Mr. Brudenel, the ministerial member, left the house.

Wentworth in an agony followed his friend; but found, to his dismay, that he had for the moment lost all influence with him. Beaufort rejected all offers of assistance or comfort, insisted upon his leaving him, and demanded, as the price of his ever holding communication with him again, that he would not interfere. The discomfited and unhappy Wentworth immediately returned to the House, and claimed the authority of the speaker to attach the parties; but it was

too late. On arriving at White's, to which he thought one or other might have repaired, he found both there, but unhappily both had been in such a state of irritation that they had already fought. They had in fact retired to a private room, where the perturbation of Beaufort having laid him too open, he had received his adversary's sword in his heart, and when Wentworth arrived, his gallant spirit had fled. Wentworth hung over him in dismay for many minutes, when, smiting his breast, "Alas!" cried he, "I am his murderer," and he rushed from the house.

His night was misery itself, although he had the consolation of Herbert and De Vere, who had heard of the catastrophe, and immediately sought him. A veil must be drawn over his wretchedness, for it cannot be described; but the wretchedness itself, and the horror which caused it, added one crime more to those of party ambition.

The feelings of Wentworth continued to be harrowed up under this heavy blow, which not only fell sorely upon him at the time, but continued to wound him for years. For he in vain endeavoured to lay this death upon the too sensitive and jealous character of his friend,—jealous even to weakness, in all that touched his honour.

But whatever share this weakness really had in the almost self-immolation of Beaufort, Wentworth could never lose the mournful idea, that, but for his own hastiness, the catastrophe might have been avoided. The thought disabled him from all exertion for many weeks, and he often gave to his friend tears, which fell frequent and fast, long after the funeral, when, as assistant-mourner, he accompanied Beaufort's father, who followed his unhappy son to, what we may call, his self-dug grave. Though the event possessed so entirely the character of a rencontre of passion on both sides, that Mr. Brudenel, the survivor, was almost instantly acquitted of all penalty; yet he seemed so advisedly, as well as so determinedly to have provoked the quarrel, that Wentworth ever afterwards characterized it as a murder, perpetrated in party rage.

We know not what reason there might be in this; but, strange to say, the sacrifice which Beaufort had made of himself, far from saving his memory at the moment, only gave occasion for the vileness and blackness of bad spirits to show themselves. It was even more than ever reported in the world, that this high-souled man had actually entered into a treaty with Lord Oldcastle, to quit his party, and join the minister's ranks, for the reward of high office to himself, and promotion in the peerage for his father. And this false colouring continued so long to gain ground, that De Vere often urged it in his arguments, both with Dr. Herbert and Wentworth, on the cruel injustice of party spirit.

In truth, the best of party men are too prone to attribute bad motives to their antagonists; the worst, too happy to assimilate those antagonists to themselves. The one think to run their adversaries down by it; the others, to raise themselves up to a level with their superiors.

Beaufort was by all confessed the most powerful man of talents in the opposition, next to his friend. Was it nothing, then, to Lord Oldcastle, that the world believed, without any actual misrepresentation from his lordship, that in opposing him, Beaufort was not sincere? He was supposed by some to have changed sides for the promise of power. Was it nothing, for such a man as Clayton to favour such a supposition? The *parvenu* basked under such authority.

But a truce to this heart-sickening proof of the proneness of God's creatures to tear one another to pieces in the arena of ambition. Let those who have passed through *rude donatus*, and are recovered from this spirit;—still more, let those who have never known it, but spent their hours in the innocence of the shade, enjoy their better fortune, and be thankful.

CHAPTER XXI.

HEALING.

Can'st thou not minister to a mind diseased?
SHAKSPEARE.

THE conduct of Wentworth, and that of De Vere, were differently operated upon by the tragic story we have related. The personal acquaintance of De Vere with Beaufort was not such as to occasion a disabling paroxysm of grief. He, therefore, was free, as well as disposed, to join in the discussions, little favourable to the public men of the day, which this untimely death occasioned. It did no good to his now nurtured disgust at the character of the times. By degrees he relaxed from his eagerness in the loud investigation which prevailed; but he buried the event, together with all its concomitant circumstances, deep in his heart. There they became objects of silent, but unceasing meditation.

On the other hand, Wentworth at first shut himself up, without being able to utter a complaint.

When he emerged, he took an early opportunity of pronouncing a merited eulogy upon the friend whom the country, as well as himself, had lost; and when he came to the calumnious reports we have mentioned, he boldly charged them upon those, who, he said, had sought to blacken his friend's reputation, because they had been unable to gain him.

The partisans of the minister answered but feebly, and Wentworth thundered in reply. He pointed to many who were in mourning for Beaufort, on both sides of the House, and asked if they would allow his injured memory to sleep unrevenged? Those really innocent of what he so boldly imputed, were intimidated by his vehemence; while the tale-bearers, and those who had dabbled in the intrigue, were uneasy in their seats, and some of them left the House. Clayton, in particular, said it had been a most unpleasant evening;

and though Lord Oldcastle was certainly innocent of the charge, the supper afterwards, at that nobleman's, was constrained and silent.

The subject was not soon abandoned by Wentworth, but excited him during much of the remainder of the Sessions, till the fever of his mind communicated itself to his body, which sunk under it. He fell, indeed, into a deep and prolonged melancholy, which ended in his becoming dangerously ill. During this, and while slowly recovering, he saw few but Herbert and De Vere, who worked upon him in different ways; the President persuading him to plunge deeper than ever into business; De Vere, to abandon it altogether. For once, the younger counsellor prevailed, but not without the assistance of Wentworth's physician, who advised diversion, and a life as different as possible from that to which he had been accustomed.

"It is not merely a change of scene which I recommend," said Dr. Wilmot, "but a total change, if it can be made, of all habits and pursuits, and even, if possible, of the mind itself. I would not only turn you out of doors, but leave you there barefoot, to shift for yourself, without horse, or coach, and nothing but a wallet, or a knapsack. What say you, for example, to a walk over Switzerland?"

"Time was," answered Wentworth, "when such a proposal might have had its attractions. I believe I had once romance as well as elasticity of limb, sufficient for it. Such things must now be left to De Vere."

De Vere, who was present, caught at this, for he had himself walked over some parts of Switzerland.

"Come," said Dr. Wilmot, "at six-and-thirty, one is not positively worn out; and perhaps I might allow you a horse."

"You must make me forget too many things," observed Wentworth, sighing, "before I can enjoy such a scheme. I once, indeed, remember a very happy time—" and he stopped.

"Proceed," said the observing Wilmot.

"I only mean," replied Wentworth, "happy, because the print of every thing was new.—I represent-

ed to myself things and men as I thought they should be; and they always seemed to be what I represented them."

De Vere grew remarkably attentive.

"And have twelve or fourteen years destroyed all this?" asked Wilmot.

"Pretty well; considering where I have passed them."

"You are still an invalid," said the Doctor, "and I refuse you as a judge. Our young friend here will decide differently."

"He is a great deal worse than I," returned Wentworth, smiling.

Doctor Wilmot stared. "I shall set you both down," cried he, "as patients for a very different atmosphere than Switzerland, and send you to Monroe."

"Yet, I am for the tour," said De Vere; "only, as we have both seen Switzerland, I venture to propose a less known region in the Pyrenees, and offer myself as a companion."

"The Pyrenees let it be," replied Wilmot, "though I do not think I shall let you go; for you are not fit associates to put one another in good-humour with the world."

"But if the world is so good, will it not do that for itself?"

"I grant you," replied the Doctor, perceiving that he was caught. "Air and exercise, however, diversion and removal from the passing scene, are often necessary in the best of worlds."

"If I am to go, I care not how soon," said Wentworth.

Where parties are so willing, a treaty is easily made; and one early morning at the end of May, while, after a long and a tumultuous debate, which had lasted nine hours, the Speaker was in the very act of putting the question, to a House worn out with fatigue and want of sleep, the ex-Minister was seen with De Vere, sallying over Westminster Bridge, on their way to Dover. Wentworth had, indeed, been, with difficulty, restrained from pushing himself into the thickest of the debate,

which was upon a question of foreign policy, vital to the country, and which he admirably understood. Wilmot, who sincerely loved, as well as admired his patient, was forced to act with all the despotism of his profession to prevent it. He spoke with the authority of a man, who held in his hands the destinies of life and death, and pronounced the latter without escape if he was disobeyed.

"I would exact a promise from you," added he, "that you would not stir from home this evening, but I know you will not keep it."

Mr. Wentworth looked surprised.

"Nay, I don't mind looks," said the Doctor, "I have had too many *party* patients not to know that I am right. So, if you think yourself obliged to me, I tell you what you shall do; instead of a fee, you shall give me a dinner, and I will give up my patients for the evening."

As he had all the cultivation of his profession; that is, nearly all the most agreeable parts of science, which he dealt out most agreeably in conversation, and moreover exceeded all of his order in what is called *bonhommie*, his proposal was gladly accepted by his distinguished patient, whom he watched almost to bed, and dismissed, after exacting his solemn promise, that he would start, if possible, with the lark the next morning.

Dr. Wilmot was in fact a sagacious observer of what he called cases of human nature, and particularly cases of ambition, combining, as he said they did, so much food for moral, as well as professional meditation. They ended, he observed, often in insanity, to which they tended as violently he thought, as those of the other great passion, love itself. This opinion he had formed, from ample observation in the career of his duty as a visitor of the lunatic establishments of the metropolis; and the only difference he found in the influence of these all-absorbing passions, was, that the cases of madness from ambition were most prevalent in males, those of love in females.

A person like Dr. Wilmot was, upon the whole, perhaps the best friend, as well as the best medical adviser,

Mr. Wentworth could have had. And here let us not refuse to pay a tribute to this most amiable profession, which it deserves beyond all others; that it contributes (and, indeed, cannot be exercised in perfection without it,) to the moral happiness, as well as the bodily sanity of mankind. Other professions have their evident importance, and, from requiring all the great virtues, are rewarded with wealth, and honour. But none, like this, winds itself into an intimacy with the secret heart of man, and thus obtains his confidence, and acquires his love. Indeed it must be so, since perhaps half our diseases spring from mind; and the cure of these depends more upon benevolence, kindness, and discretion, than upon medicine itself. Hence we may, I think, observe, that while the distinguished in other professions are more outwardly honoured, the friend of the sick-room is most personally loved.

CHAPTER XXII.

FEMALE DELICACY.

A woman scorns sometimes what best contents her.
SHAKSPEARE.

WAS it possible for De Vere to quit England without wishing to see Constance? He both wished and sought it; but, extraordinary as it may seem, it was not now so easy.

It may be supposed that, after all we have recorded, the pleasure (never very great) which his uncle had in seeing him had not lately been increased. With Clayton he had terminated, not merely friendship, but acquaintance; and the delicate feelings of that gentleman were so overpowered at the sight of the man he had injured, that he always endeavoured to avoid a meeting, which was not indeed more pleasant to De Vere himself. But Clayton was almost always with Lord Mow-

bray. The morning calls of De Vere had, therefore, been chiefly confined to inquiries after his cousin; and his cousin was, somehow or other, seldom to be seen. The dinner, as well as the evening invitations, also became much less frequent than they had been.

We have observed, that there are motives for every thing; but Lord Mowbray was too glad to shroud his fear of seeing a man he had injured, under another fear that that man might injure him. In fact, after having given the utmost latitude to the intimacy between his daughter and De Vere, he was taken with a sudden fit of prudence, and thought there was a danger in it, which on every account he ought to avoid.

To do him justice, he possibly never would have thought of this himself. But Lord Cleveland, of whom we have so long lost sight, put it in his head. The undeviating coldness of Constance, had completely estranged this great aristocrat in love, as well as every thing else, from pursuing the only real affair of heart he had ever had. His pride as well as his love, had sustained bitter mortification, which, added to his disappointments at court, cankered his bosom; though he understood the demands of pride far too well to let it appear. He carried about with him, therefore, more than ever, that internal gnawing, which, though the vulture did not appear, was not less keen than that of Prometheus itself. His misery was so complete, that, though of success with Constance he had begun to despair, his love itself had not, therefore, abandoned him, and he felt that the success of a rival would have driven him to madness. Against this, therefore, it was his active study to guard. As to his disappointment in politics, he had made a tolerable compromise, in no where suffering himself to appear as the *subordinate* supporter of Lord Oldcastle's ministry, but as the head of a party, powerful in itself, which Lord Oldcastle was supposed to court, under the name of the king's friends. And though for some of those friends, the monarch, whose name was usurped, had not the highest respect, yet it was convenient for many to erect a standard for themselves, who either thought they were above serving under the banners of another, or whom

no other was very eager to receive. With this standard in his hand, and with some followers, Lord Cleveland contrived to blind the world on the point of his personal consequence with the highest personage in the state; and while that world believed that Lord Oldcastle was no more than his co-equal, and only more than his co-ordinate from his own suffrance, things did pretty well.

Not so with the love of this ambitious person:—he had desisted from his pursuit, because too proud to continue it; but, with all his tact, he could not resist the bad taste which now got possession of him, in disparaging the former object of his adoration. But his attempts were ill enough concealed; and men, and women too, drew their own conclusions from the sneering tone he affected.

Poor Constance!—But no! she was not poor!—The dignified and unresenting manner with which she received accounts of this behaviour, and even sometimes personally perceived it, set her far higher than ever in the approbation of mankind; and Lord Cleveland was forced at last to say, that he would no longer raise her into consequence, by making her the object of his criticism.

But Lord Cleveland had too intimate an acquaintance with his own heart, not to know what would be the death's wound of its happiness, if ever it had been happy. The success of any man with Constance he dreaded, as much as his female equal in ambition, Madame de Pompadour, ever dreaded a rival mistress with her dissolute monarch. The cup of each was poisoned, and its sweets turned to bitterness, by the all-devouring fear in which they lived. Well might each of them have exclaimed to their ignorant admirers, in the language of the arch demon of pride himself,

> "Ay me! they little know
> With what fierce torments inwardly I groan,
> While they adore me on the throne of hell."

The life of Lord Cleveland had, in this respect, become a perpetual fever. The assiduities of the Duke

of Bellamont towards Constance had been wormwood to him; while her resistance of them, filled him with still greater fear; for, with his opinions, it was impossible for him to think any female heart, not profoundly preoccupied, could resist youth, rank, and wealth, such as belonged to this favoured young man.

He watched therefore the approach of all who came near her, and above all that of De Vere,—who, he said, with fierceness, to Clayton, seemed born everywhere to cross his path. In De Vere himself he could perceive nothing but respectful distance; but (led to the observation by Clayton,) in her he saw, or thought he saw, a constraint of manner towards her cousin, which, to one of his experience, told many tales. It made him heart-sick; and, in mere relief, he hastened to communicate his suspicions to her father.

That penetrating nobleman was glad of any cause for what had so entirely baffled, as well as affected him; namely, the obstinacy, as he called it, of his daughter, in refusing the two greatest matches in England. But when the suspicion got hold of him, that all this was occasioned by love for another, and that other, however nearly allied to him, ruined in his prospects by his own rashness, and, of all men in England, the most destitute, it should seem, in the powers necessary to redeem himself, the concern and embarrassment of my Lord Mowbray were at their height.

It was his fate always to appear to despise counsel, yet never to be able to act without it; and it mattered little whose or what that counsel was, provided it afforded him an opportunity to unburthen himself. On the present occasion, the obviously best counsellor he could have was at his elbow, in the very party about whom he wished to consult. But this was far beyond his lordship to conceive. On the contrary, it seemed but regular policy to conceal from her all that he wished to discover; though a word, a look, on his part, in parental confidence, would have laid her heart bare to him, from a sense of filial duty alone.

He knew not the jewel he possessed, and took another course, more in the spirit of a politician, but whether so well calculated to succeed, was a question

which he did not ask. In a word, trusting to the high mind of his sister, he wrote to Lady Eleanor his fears that there might be a greater intimacy between the cousins than it was prudent to cultivate, considering the disparity of their situations, and, in particular, considering the views of many men of the very first consequence in the state, in regard to his daughter. In other respects too, he thought it behoved Lady Eleanor to give her son advice on his personal conduct; "which seemed," he said, "that of a madman, determined on self ruin, rather than of one who, from his abilities and ancient name, might rise to any height he pleased. Tell him," said he, "on my part, (though I have often told it him in vain, myself,) to remember the maxim which I always propose to all young men, '*nullum numen abest, si sit prudentia;*' which means, my dear sister, (for I dare say it will be necessary to translate it for you,) that a man may always make his fortune, if he only have his wits about him."

Strange as it appeared to Lord Mowbray, this letter did not seem to produce the intended effect upon Lady Eleanor. Far from remonstrating, as he wished, with her son, "It is not for me," she said, in reply, "to give advice to De Vere. In regard to my niece, he knows what honour is too well to stand in need of it. In regard to the world, I will not affront him by offering it. Depend upon it my son will covet no elevation that is to be purchased at the expense of principle; and of that principle I willingly leave *him* to be the judge. At any rate, if he fail, he has me, and honourable poverty, to retire upon."

Lord Mowbray made a thousand wry faces as he finished reading this letter. Then, muttering something about honourable nonsense, he rang the bell to desire Lady Constance to attend him; and without much reflection, as Lady Eleanor had refused to help him, he thought himself justifiable in placing her letter in the hands of his daughter, leaving the latter to guess the contents of that to which it was an answer.

The delicate Constance was thunderstruck at allusions, and replies to allusions, which, however obscure without the subject matter, proved evidently to her

sensitive mind that her conduct and feelings, in that which was of the last consequence to a woman's delicacy, had not only been canvassed in a correspondence between her father and her aunt, but had been supposed, by her father at least, to have been the subject of observation in the world. Her fears (as they always will where true modesty is concerned) went before her inquiries, and she felt a shock on the communication of her aunt's letter, from which she could not recover. At length she falteringly asked, what could have given rise to answers so deeply affecting her conduct, perhaps even her reputation in society?

Lord Mowbray, observing her agitation, which was in truth beyond what was warranted by the real circumstances of the case, then perceived the mistake he had made, and lamented that he had not kept a copy of his letter to his sister. "It would have explained all this at once."

"However," added he, "do not be alarmed; I only mentioned what I had been told of the observation of the world, upon your intimacy with Mortimer, and desired his mother, for his sake, as well as yours, to give him proper advice upon the occasion."

"Only!" cried Constance, looking aghast—"Only! The observation of the world!—For Heaven's sake, my dear father, what can this mean? What have I done that the world has observed, or that you should convey to my aunt, and, through her, to another? Oh! how properly has she judged, and how like herself! And to what am I reduced, when my whole pride of character has hung upon such a chance?"—She here stopped in an agony of distress, which alarmed her father the more, because he could not possibly understand it.

Alas! though her parent, he was not made to deal with so delicate a being as Constance. He endeavoured to soothe her, but knew not the real topics of consolation. He felt he had been in fault, yet knew not exactly how; and at any rate thought it beneath him to own it. It was therefore with difficulty, and certainly not to her relief, that Constance collected that the world coupled her name with her cousin's; but for her

intimacy with whom, her father thought the fortunes of the Duke of Bellamont, or Lord Cleveland, would not have fared so ill.

This was quite enough to subdue Constance, without the addition of the displeasure Lord Mowbray expressed at such liberties being taken with the heiress of his house, or the threat of his eternal anger against Mortimer, if from his or her conduct, their names should be mentioned together, and such reports continue. The heiress of the Mowbrays felt indeed no *affront* to her name, by a report which coupled it with that of De Vere; but the dignity and purity of the Lady Constance felt alarmed that she had been observed by the eye of curiosity, and suspected of favourable but unsanctioned feelings towards a man who had never addressed her. This interview, therefore, with her father, was the most painful of her life.

To the feelings and fortunes of De Vere the consequence was still more disastrous. His intercourse with his uncle had long been on the wane; but though he had from principle endeavoured to wean himself from the intimacy with his uncle's daughter, which had been till then the charm of his existence, yet the persuasion that he possessed her regard was the soothing support of his soul. What then did he feel, when, instead of the pleasure which usually lighted up her features at his approach, he found her reserved, constrained, and, as he thought, distant? 'Twas the first real shock her personal demeanour had ever given him.

About the same time he also received an account from Mellilot, whom he had made one of his agents for the borough, that his sister had been forbidden by her lady, from ever meddling with that subject again; "which, to be sure, said Mellilot, argufies a change in my lord, that some on us mayn't like."

The change in my lord neither surprised nor alarmed De Vere; the change in my lady did both.

Embarrassed, distressed, disappointed, mortified, his cousin now became the object of his study more anxiously than ever. Her distance was as evident as his own misery upon feeling it; and, utterly unable to account for the alteration, he was tempted to exclaim

"Frailty, thy name is woman!"

But something whispered him that though it might be the name of woman, it was not the name of Constance.

He had, however, no opportunity in London, of clearing up that point, and it was amidst all these uncertainties of his heart, that his other great interests were excited by the tragic end of Beaufort, the consequent illness and danger of Wentworth, and his undertaking to accompany him in his convalescence upon that tour of diversion, prescribed by Dr. Wilmot. Thus, he had little opportunity to penetrate the thickening cloud that obscured the fondest hope of his mind, far less to dissipate its darkness, and let in the day.

Thus disgusted with every thing that had awaited him in his own country, he began to meditate a longer sojourn abroad than his attendance upon Wentworth required, or than at first he had been disposed to contemplate. His heart always beat high in resistance to oppression, whether towards himself or others; and he pleased himself with the thought of offering his sword to the confederates in Poland, who, though arrayed nominally against their enslaved king, were then interesting every generous mind by their exertions (unfortunately vain) against a foreign yoke. The notion was rather floating in fancy than embodied in fixed determination; and Wentworth dissuaded him from it, as useless to those whom he wanted to serve, as well as detrimental to himself, if he should be wanted at home. Nevertheless, it continued to possess him, and hints of it got abroad.

There was one person, however, to whom it was necessary to tell it in form, from whom he expected comfort, or at least sympathy, and whom, even without this design, duty as well as love impelled him to see. His attachment to his mother had always been so tender, and the confidence between them so sincere, that his best feelings were soothed by the thought of beholding her again. He longed also to visit the home he loved, after what he began to think had been a toilsome and anxious pilgrimage in a new world—for such the events of the last eight or nine months had

made every thing appear. He therefore begged a week of Wentworth, to visit Lady Eleanor and Talbois, before he departed from England; a request which was without difficulty granted by one who, however an invalid in body, and a prey to grief in mind, felt that mind still lingering among the scenes of his greatness, and yielding with regret to the necessity there was, for a time, to abandon them.

CHAPTER XXIII.

CHANGE OF SCENE.

> And whither go they? up to the eastern tower,
> Whose height commands as subject—all the vale.
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

DE VERE was soon among the haunts of his earlier youth, and seemed to breathe a freer air on the banks of the Dove. The grotesque mounds of Tutbury Castle, with its ivy-mingled walls, once more greeted his eye; and he stopt his horses to indulge himself in a thousand recollections. For we may remember how dear the solitary grandeur of this remnant of ancient independence had been to his childhood, how often he had climbed among its ruins; and he did not now fail to recal the wild pleasure with which he had sometimes, for an hour together, surveyed, from the top of one of its towers, the devious course of his favourite stream. He at the same time remembered what peculiar notions he had formed of the interior of that world which he then beheld afar off. They were indeed somewhat different from those he had now brought back with him.

Other recollections of a more recent date, and from what had lately passed, not quite so happy, also mingled themselves in his mind.

The horse he rode (which had been sent over to *meet him at Burton*) was a mare called Beauty, who

deserved her name so well, and whom he had taught so gently to canter, that she had been the favourite palfry of Constance, all the summer long. It added to his pleasure in seeing her again; he frequently patted her neck, and even talked to her of her mistress, who had rode her once on a visit to this very spot. The docile animal seemed, as he thought, to understand him, by the sensible manner in which she received his caresses; "but she will, I fear, ride you no more, Beauty," said De Vere, and the thought added not to his spirits.

Having now crossed the Dove, and advanced midway into the village of Tutbury, the zigzag Saxon arches, and gothic old segments of the church, half-way up the hill, arrested and pleased his eyes, as they had often done before; and the castellated towers above, seemed to beckon his return to them, so much in the character of an old friend, that he could not continue his route, but delivering Beauty to his groom, "I will give one more hour," said he, "to a place which used to make so many happy."

Accordingly, he bounded up the steep, and as he traced out, (as he easily could, though ruined,) the rude outlines of this great baronial residence, he fell into more precise thoughts upon such a scene, than had employed his mind in earlier days. For he had not then seen modern courtiers, or jealous politicians; he knew not then the meaning of intrigue, nor the silent and baneful machinations of a Parvenu.

His better information now drew a comparison, prompted by the place, between the modern grandee and the ancient noble; and he thought with vivid interest of the changes which time had so strongly wrought in the pride, power, and consequence of the feudal chief. I will not say that he lamented it, or *preferred* the lot of the lordly savage; though had he by chance been born the owner of such a castle as Tutbury, three or four centuries sooner, he perhaps would not have complained. It is certain he fell into a train of meditation upon the high minded bearing of the old English gentleman, compared with his diminished consequence in modern days, not very much to the advantage of the latter.

We believe it is Smith who makes a comparison between the personal consequence of an old baron, and a courtier of the present day; the latter of whom, in order to shine in a drawing-room, spends that on a diamond buckle, which enabled his ancestors to maintain a thousand retainers. De Vere had not then read Smith. His feelings, however, made him jump to the same conclusion; when, contemplating the almost inaccessible fastness where he found himself, he exclaimed with the stout earl of Norfolk—

> "Were I in my castle of Bungay,
> Hard by the river Waveney,
> I'd ne care for the king of Cockney."

In fact, the scenes he had left in London, sank almost into contempt, when he thought of that enviable independence, as he called it, which used to be asserted by the great English Thane; and it need not be wondered, that, in the present moody state of his mind, he did not advert to the questionable nature of the independence itself. For the safety even of such a chief could not be named with the immense improvement in the lot of all, which the greater security of balanced rights, and a government by law, have since established.

He did not then think himself wrong; but looking only at the dark side of one picture, and the bright side of the other, he almost apostrophized the castle, as, with folded arms, he walked the area of its keep.

"Yes!" said he, (thinking, perhaps of the ancient earls of his own name) "there was a charm in the feudal times with all their faults! If they were insecure and ignorant, they were favourable to the manly virtues. Mansions like these, massive and impenetrable, though rude and rough, were the emblems of their lords,—little refined, but hospitable, bold, and commanding. I question if they have done well to exchange their power of protecting themselves and others, (while they lived doing deeds of kindness among a devoted tenantry,) for the favour of court smiles, or the ambiguous expectations kindled by a Lord Oldcastle."

We by no means give these reflections as just. Nay, De Vere soon after himself corrected them. But they exemplified how easily, when the mind is under any commanding impression, the judgment will take its tinge from the colouring of the mind.

With these reflections, De Vere strode across the keep, now a green sheep-walk, where once the minstralx of the midland counties sang in weeds of peace, but where no sound was now heard, save that of the sheep-bell.

His object was to visit a homely old couple, who had, nine or ten years before, inhabited the great tower of the place, and had often kindly received him in his wanderings. They were a farmer and his wife, who rented the keep and other lands, turning the spacious and massive tower into an inconvenient farm-house.

De Vere remembered with pleasure the talk he used to have with the kind old man and woman, and the impression their singular habitation made upon him.

It was still the same as when he last saw it, though it had certainly undergone a strange metamorphose since the days when "time-honoured Lancaster" kept royal feasting within its precincts. There was still, however, some remnants of the more modern days of Elizabeth:

"An old buttery hatch, worn quite off the hooks;
And an old kitchen that maintained half a dozen old cooks."

There was, indeed, no

"Old study, fill'd full of learned old books;"

But there was the same old bible, in black letter, with the chain which had once attached it to the clerk's desk in the church below; together with the same Pilgrim's Progress, and Gulliver's Travels; which latter used so to puzzle both the farmer and his wife in a winter's evening, to make out whether it was true or false. These were all lodged in the kitchen window, so high from the floor, and so deep in the wall, that a portable wooden horse-block always stood under it, to enable

the farmer to reach them when he was studiously inclined.

The kitchen was at least sixteen feet high. A smaller room adjoining, but full as high, contained a bedstead as old as Plantagenet, with modern yellow woollen curtains, not a great deal older than the restoration. This was lighted, far above man's height, by loopholes, glazed on the outside, save where "the temple haunting marlet" had made its way through the aperture, to build its nest in security.

Here, for thirty years, the farmer and his wife had reposed, with nothing to disturb them within, and indifferent to the storms which often rattled without.

Above, a corresponding chamber served as a cheese room, and another as a granary, and the whole was so still, and so secluded, that one might have supposed it the abode of the early inhabitants of the earth. This had never struck De Vere, when in his state of rusticity, as out of the common course. Returned from the world, and cognizant now of its thronged exhibitions, its strivings, and gilded trappings, the contrast forcibly engaged him. He questioned his old friends with his usual affability; but they were so impressed with the imposing air and countenance which a few critical years, added to education, had given him, that they viewed him with a sort of sheepish wonder. By degrees this wore off; but the monotony and seclusion of their life, though they denoted no unhappiness, occupied as they were with their country gear, whispered him that those born in the world were made to *mix* in the world.

"Not, however," added he to himself, as he clambered to the leads of the tower to try to discover Castle Mowbray in the distance; "not as my uncle mixes in it."

That residence of his ancestors was indistinctly visible to the naked eye, though several miles off. Indeed its site was pretty much the same as Tutbury, each being built on a sudden and precipitous ridge, overlooking a wide extended plain through which the Dove and the Trent both meandered. But his friend, the farmer, now brought him an old-fashioned spying-

glass, left there by some of the Vernons when they visited the keep; and through this he easily discovered not only the white turrets of his uncle's mansion, but the terrace where he had so often walked, and the park where he had so often rode, with one with whom he felt as if he should never walk or ride again. The scenes, indeed, of his happiness with his cousin, thronged upon and vanished from his fancy so fast, that he thought them a dream.

"Alas!" cried he, "would that they had really been so!" and he descended hastily from the tower.

This distant view of the castle he had so loved, filled De Vere with the desire of approaching it nearer, and as he had announced to his mother no particular time for his arrival, he resolved to make a circuit of some miles, in order, before he joined her, once more to visit that proud place, where not many months before he had been so happy, that his present lot seemed wretched by comparison.

CHAPTER XXIV.

DOVEDALE.

Haply this life is best,
If quiet life is best; sweeter to you
Who have a sharper known.
SHAKSPEARE.

THE beams of the sun had for some time sloped upwards, when De Vere left Tutbury Castle and re-crossed the Dove, with a view to push on towards Castle Mowbray that night. The mood generated by his visit to Tutbury was not exhilarating. The contrast between the wild and bounding elasticity of his spirits, when first he saw it, and seemed to take possession of all that he saw *from* it; and now, that he felt disappointed (for he did so) in all the hopes hitherto of his life, made his heart heavy within him. He revolved

all that had passed since he first left the forest of Needwood; and, in a spirit of mortification, he could not help mentally exclaiming—"Roll on, ye dark brown years, ye bring no joy on your wings to Ossian."

He checked his horse for a minute, when he came once more to Sudbury, and lingered over that beautiful front, "looking tranquillity," which had always pleased, but in his present humour, pleased him more than the utmost sublimity of grandeur. There are moments, indeed, when the soul may be so pensively occupied with its own feeling, and that feeling requires so much the balm of quiet, that grandeur seems even offensive to it; and while De Vere loitered willingly beside the low grey wall that bounded this gentle though ample mansion, he would have passed at a gallop, the façades of Versailles, or the princely elegance of Stowe itself.

Presently he again joined the Dove, and as it was scarcely a longer road to Castle Mowbray, and a splendid sun promised a long length of evening, he resolved to pursue the beautiful course of the river, through all its vallies, and along all its rocks, which, towards its source, render it so infinitely more romantic than when gliding gently through the plain. He was acquainted with almost every one of its little intricacies and entanglements of wood and crag, and, with Cotton in his hand, had often lounged along the banks of Bentley brook, the favourite scene of that philosophic angler's recreation; or traced him to that philosophic retreat, (now become so classical from his description of it,) where he and his master* had mingled their minds in conversation, after the patient toil of their morning sport.

These haunts, however, had now become too involved and precipitous to thread them on horseback, and in the humour he was in, it even suited him better to pursue his purpose on foot. He dismounted, therefore, at the top of a steep ascent, from which he had to sink suddenly by a winding path to the brink of the stream, which had by this time become a torrent. For

* Old Izaac.

he was now in Dovedale, with whose beautiful varieties of wildness and cultivation, of tangled wood, of rock, and bursting cascade, many perhaps are acquainted. He, therefore, cautiously proceeded till he stood on the very edge of the water-fall. It fumed and foamed, and rattled hoarsely from rock to rock, and led him along with it to the bottom, where it suddenly quitted its tumultuous character, and, as if by magic, became a smooth, untroubled, clear and glassy stream, watering a home view that was delicious.

It was a green glen, long, winding, and narrow, shut in by two steep banks, shaggy from top to bottom with copse wood, now in fresh leaf, with here and there an oak, or mountain ash, left for timber at the last falling. The whole space, from side to side, was perhaps not a furlong across, and the now sober river, full to the brim, wended along in silent and equal march through a margin of grass, green as an emerald. By its side, was a foot-path, so elastic to the tread, and so beset with daisies, that one would have supposed the fairy troop had made it their nightly passage as they coursed up and down this lovely dale. Hence, perhaps, its name of the Valley of Oberon.

The whole was a sight which no traveller of the world, whatever his business, character, or contemplations, but must have stopped to enjoy. The miser all shrunk, the soldier all rugged, or the politician all dazzled in mind, even the hardened sinner, or thief on a predatory expedition, would have paused to behold it, and forgot himself awhile in the gentleness of the scene.

We may suppose that De Vere could not pass such a scene unobserved in any humour. In that he was in, it was delightful to his senses; and while his horses, winding in the road above, only added a pleasant variety to the landscape, he sat down on a stone to indulge his reflections. To say his eye was not pleased, would wrong the truth; but it was rather his eye than his memory. Several eventful years, (eventful in his young life,) had passed since he had sat upon that very stone, beholding the march of that very river. The stone and the river were the same; was De Vere so

too? His mind, indeed his character, had undergone no alteration, but not so his hopes, or his opinions. He knew this, and he could not help thinking of this his native stream, as a contemporary poet thought of the Lodon, upon his rejoining its banks, on which he had been nursed, after many years of wandering in the world.

> "Ah! what a weary race my feet have run,
> Since first I trod thy banks, with alders crown'd,
> And thought my way was all through fairy ground,
> Where first my muse to lisp her notes begun!
> While pensive memory traces back the round
> Which fills the varied interval between,
> Much pleasure, more of sorrow, marks the scene."

Remembering these verses with emotion, it is certain that De Vere, as well as Warton, in revolving his life, meditated on

> "Much pleasure, more of sorrow!"

It must be owned, however, that in a succeeding stanza, the poet had an advantage which De Vere could not boast.

> "Sweet native stream, whose skies and sun so pure,
> No more return to cheer my evening road,
> Yet still one joy remains, *that not obscure,*
> *Nor useless,* all my vacant days have flow'd."

This last thought was not De Vere's; for, free as he felt that his life had been from vice or dishonour, he felt but too keenly that it had been hitherto useless, and his lot obscure. "Of what avail," said he, rising from his seat, and taking the foot-path,—"of what avail the advantages with which I was supposed to start; high and powerful connexions; education; perhaps—(or may I indeed say it?) reputation? of what avail all these if they have only left me where they found me, idle, unemployed, and useless? Have I even gained a friend, or have I not—" (and here he faltered almost to sighing,) "have I not lost—?" The sadness of his thought prevented him from finishing. He then be-

gan to question whether in reality he might not have been too fastidious, too unaccommodating to the weaknesses, or perhaps fair pursuits of men, at least as worthy and estimable as himself? Whether they were doing more than obeying the impetus to action, given by nature, in what he presumed to blame, and had chosen to avoid? Might he not have done as they did? And if so, might he not have kept his friends, and been in the high road to advancement with them, which might ultimately lead even to success in another object too tender almost to think of?

These were cruel thoughts at the moment; and, to say truth, ambition is not only so natural to man, but so properly pursued, *when properly regulated*, that he would be an ill teacher who should propose to eradicate it from the mind, and he a worse pupil who would suffer it to be eradicated. All this now struck the more forcibly on the thoughts of De Vere, from the solitude in which he made these reflections; a solitude to which, it might be, he was most prematurely about to reduce himself. "And yet," said he, hurrying on his steps, "to be like Clayton! or even Eustace! or Cleveland, worst of all!—No! a scene like this is heaven to it."

He was pursuing this train, when he was saluted by the note of the wood pigeon, which sounded from the copse above. He recollected how often of an evening at this time of the year, he had thrown down his spade and rake at Talbois, when tired of gardening, to listen to those lulling notes, till night came on, and he returned to a contented though homely supper, and afterwards to a bed, in which, from the labours of the day, and his ignorance of the struggles of the world, his sleep was as instantaneous as it was sweet.

"And am I reduced to regret those days," said he, "when all was ignorance, and I even shrank under oppression?—almost to wish for them again!—I who have known Constance, and been the friend of Wentworth?"

"And yet," continued he, "what have I known in this world of ours, dazzling as are its scenes, comparable to what this little spot, this shut up valley may afford?"

Thus reasoned, and thus fluctuated in his reasoning, the honourable, natural, and enthusiastic De Vere; with no pleasure either from the satisfaction of his recollections, or the certainty of his conclusions. In truth, he was tossed between disgust at many things he had seen, and his fear, that if he renounced the world, he might renounce his duty to society, and above all, the secret hope of his heart, which, whatever resolve he might make against it, still dwelt there in the image of his cousin.

He had now, however, approached to the end of the valley, where the river, rolling over a broad weir, turned itself into a mill-stream, working a considerable wheel, in the close neighbourhood of which, rose a retired house of old red brick, but looking cool and enlivened, from being almost covered by a large vine. It belonged to the owner of the mill. Opposite to this, a little promontory or elbow, formed by a wood-clothed steep, pushed itself into the stream, so as completely to stop the pathway on its bank. Here the glen opened another reach, resembling the last in form, only busy and peopled, with houses bordering one whole side of the river; a little inn; a little church; and a pretty parsonage. To a man at ease with himself, and with mankind, this scene would have been (as in former days to De Vere it had been,) a perfect paradise.

De Vere had now to cross the river, but there was no bridge, and he looked rather wistfully at a punt, moored close to the piles which contained the miller's garden. The miller himself was there, in the act of giving an evening's watering to a large bed of sprouts he had just planted, which had drooped, and hung their heads during a hot day, and now seemed to drink with eagerness the great buckets which the miller threw over them. They had already begun to revive, and looked greener and greener for it, as he continued his refreshing work. He himself seemed to take such delight in it, that though he saw De Vere's embarrassment to get across, and resolved to relieve it by punting him over in his own good time, yet he thought he would just finish his first job; "the plants," he said, "seemed so much pleased with it."

At the same time, a sleek, good-humoured looking dame, came out of the house, to beg the miller, while his hand was in, not to forget her pinks and polyanthus, which, she said, were as sick for want of water as the cabbage-plants themselves.

"I will," said the miller, "as soon as I have punted the gentleman over."

"Gentleman! what gentleman?" cried his wife, when, perceiving a person of De Vere's appearance, "Why, Lord bless me, Thomas Gurney," said she, "how could you let such a gentleman wait upon them foolish plants, when, perhaps, he is in a hurry, and wants to get to his inn, or, perhaps, to Muster Archer's."

"Indeed," cried De Vere, "I am in no hurry, and could look on much longer at so pleasant a work; besides, I am the person to be obliged, and ought to wait your time."

"There! Thomas Gurney," cried his wife; "and such a civil spoken gentleman, too; do lose no more time, but get into the punt."

The miller did as he was bid. "Our mistress," said he, as he pulled against the rope which stretched across the river, "is for no sooner said than done, when a good-natured thing is in hand; and yet," added he, giving a significant toss with his head, "she would have combed my locks if I had neglected them cabbage-plants, let alone her flowers she's so fond of, because Parson Archer gave them to her."

De Vere was amused, and it seemed a relief to his late train of thought to give a minute to this homely but obliging couple, who received him at his landing with a bow and a curtsey, and asked him to walk in. "Though I suppose," said the hostess, "you are going to Mr. Archer's, or at least to the Dog and Partridge, where there is always a genteel bed, though not, perhaps, for such a gentleman as you."

"I am not difficult," said De Vere, "and if I were, I should think I could find no difficulty in such a beautiful quiet place as this."

"Too quiet by half," said the dame; "for, except when the quality comes a pleasuring from the peak,

(which they don't always do neither,) you may hear a pin fall in the street. To be sure, there is the river, and them high woods," seeing De Vere looking at them with admiration, "but one can't always be looking at the same things, and if it was not for a chaise now and then coming to the Dog and Partridge, and perhaps when Mr. Archer is so good as to take a dish of tea with me, we should be moped to death."

"Speak for yourself, Betsy," said her husband, significantly; "you were always too high for your estate, you know; now I never did mope."

Perceiving De Vere very attentive, the dame replied—

"Ah! the good man, our Thomas, he is never unkind; he has got his mill and his river."

"Ay, and a lovely river too," said Gurney, "and our fathers thought so before us, without wanting to leave it. Perhaps the gentleman has not heard of the poesy upon it, as old, for aught I know, as the river itself,—

'In April, Dove's flood,
Is worth a king's good.'"

De Vere said he had read of it, and the miller went on addressing his wife.

"And you, Bess, might be as happy if you would but mend stockings more and read them books less."

At this he pointed to at least half a dozen of well-thumbed volumes from the circulating library at Ashbourne; and then both parties appealed to De Vere on their little dispute.

De Vere here found himself a scholar in the shape of a master, for being called upon to decide between these discordant characters, who yet seemed to proceed lovingly enough together in their way, he found that he himself obtained a useful lesson. The happiness of honest Thomas was unambiguous; it spoke in his eyes, in his cheeks, and in his gestures. It was always within his reach; for he was always employed and always at home. His mill lay just across his garden, and in

the one or the other all his interests, save those he gave to Mrs. Gurney, were centred.

On her part the happiness was rather more equivocal. "Our Thomas" was too good to be despised by her; but, from having no family and much time, she took to reading novels, and these turned her head, and made her discontented. She thought what fine things there were to be enjoyed in the world, if it were not that she was buried alive, as she said, in Dovedale. Her great object of curiosity when they came in her way, was what she called the *quality*, such as she had read of, and such as her fancy had painted. But as she was very seldom gratified in this particular, she was very seldom happy; for her Thomas Gurney did not exactly come up to her notion of Mr. B. in Pamela, or Sir Charles Grandison, with whose histories she was intimately acquainted. De Vere found, therefore, that she was an *ambitieuse*, with all qualities for being one of the first class, if she had but been born in another station, instead of a miller's wife. She was, however, a little consoled by the attention she said she always received from Mr. Archer.

"And who is this Mr. Archer?" asked De Vere.

"Our worthy vicar," replied the dame, "and a complete gentleman he is."

"A don't look so well as a did, though," said Gurney. "A used to be as spruce and nice as one of my quickset hedges, and shaved every day; and now he is as great a sloven almost as I be, God help me," added Gurney, stroking his sleek chin, on which there was at least a three days' beard.

"Archer, Archer!" exclaimed De Vere, "what aged man is he? or do you know what University he belonged to?"

"A comed from Oxford, I think," replied Thomas, "by all them almanacks as hangs about the house; and as for age—"

"La! bless me, sir," interrupted Mrs. Gurney, "he cannot be above your own age, only you be black, and he fair."

"I think I know him," said De Vere, and he thought of a gentleman a year or two older than himself, of no

mean acquirements, and even genius, of whom his friends had conceived great hopes at college, and with whom he had maintained a sort of intimacy there, though it did not continue after their separation in the world.

"I think I'll call at the parsonage," said De Vere, "and see if I am right, if you will be so good as to let any body show me the way."

"I will do it myself," said the miller.

"Put on your coat then, Thomas," said his wife: "one would really think you had no coat to your back, walking with such a gentleman without one."

The matter was soon arranged; the vicar's was but three stones throw off, and De Vere, with his obliging guide, were soon at the parsonage.

CHAPTER XXV.

UNEARNED RETIREMENT.

> But unto us, it is
> A cell of ignorance; travelling abed;
> A prison for a debtor, that not dares
> To stride a limit.
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

And a very pretty parsonage it was. Nothing could be more quietly gay. The house and garden ranged themselves up the side of a gentle hill, so as to have elevation sufficient to give effect to the prospect, without losing the advantage of a most perfect shelter. The river ran at foot, and from the farther bank of it rose a steep mount covered from top to bottom by timber of all varieties. The water was smooth as a mirror; every thing around was tranquil, yet cheerful, from the scenery being dotted with cottages and gay gardens; in short, Nature seemed here to repose in all her elegance.

The vicar was not at home, but was expected every instant; and having now ascertained by the superscription of an old letter on the table that Archer was his college friend, De Vere said he would wait for him; and he took his place in a window which seemed at once a seat for a painter, a poet, a philosopher, and a pious man. One would have thought it happiness enough merely to sit there.

Such, perhaps, it would have been with the proper requisites of a disposition to be content within so very narrow a circle. Without it, it is not rock, or river, or luxuriant copse, or emerald margin, that can bring back the mind from the field of its designed interest, the active business of life. From temporary care, such a seclusion is a charming relief,—and he who is worn out with fatigue and struggle in his journey through the world, might think, and even find it exquisite. Others, however, who like the owner—but let the owner, in this instance, speak for himself.

De Vere knew Archer directly, as he let himself in at a little gate from the road side; but was surprised to see, as he came up the walk, that he who had ever been so spruce and erect, so as to be almost a coxcomb at college, was now slovenly in his appearance and attire. An ill-made, and ill-brushed coat, seemed to hang about him like a sack, and a slouch in his gait, amounting to stooping, had taken place of the brisk, lively mien, De Vere had remembered.

Before he got half way up the rising ground that led to the house, he threw himself into a seat, the back of which had long been broken, and the whole going fast to decay. Here he reposed, with his head on his hand, and viewing his landscape with a lack-lustre eye, he yawned, and seemed little cheerful in his meditation.

"Is it even so?" said De Vere, "what can this mean? He seems melancholy, if not unhappy; yet I have not heard of any misfortune that has befallen him. But I will show myself."

Archer scarcely rose, when he first perceived De Vere; till making out who he was, his countenance lightened into a joy that was evidently sincere.

"And is it you?" said he, "you, who love the gay, the busy, and the powerful; you who, I see, are sometimes at court, and come to visit a poor parson in his Siberia?"

"Siberia!" exclaimed De Vere, "I was just thinking what a delicious retreat you had acquired for your philosophy and your muse; both of which promised so much at Oxford."

"Retreat!" said he, looking surprised. "Oh! ay! yes! but retreat from what?"

He paused, when not to lose the theme he was upon, De Vere observed, "retreat from the world."

"Where I have yet never been," interrupted Archer, with some quickness.

"Surely," said De Vere, "this delightful place is better than St. Bride's, in the city, or Allhallows, Barking, which I remember to have heard you were offered and refused; but I did not then know to what a paradise you gave the preference."

"True! true," returned Archer, "I had then little ambition to preach to the lord mayor and aldermen. I thought as you do of philosophy and the muses, and I have no right to complain; nay, I ought to be, and, indeed, am—satisfied."

The last sentence was uttered in a tone not quite corresponding with the sentiment; perhaps there was a little faltering as he brought out the words. "But come," added he, cheering himself, "come into my hermitage, and tell me how it is that I see you here, and where you are going—and have some refreshment. You will sup and take a bed with me of course."

De Vere said he must get to Castle Mowbray that evening, but he would take some of his brown loaf, which, with the remains of a clouded decanter of wine, and some used glasses, were still on the table.

I have a sad dawdling slut to wait upon me," said Archer, rather reddening, at observing De Vere's examination of his dessert. "She does just as she pleases, and she generally pleases not to take away my dinner things till supper is ready: I beg you will excuse it."

De Vere went on with his admiration of the beauti-

ful window, and his commendation of the preference Archer had given to such a spot; "surely much better," said De Vere, "than the air of the city, or even to be a court chaplain."

"I don't know that," said Archer, "when all road to ambition is cut off. I observe that even in the city a man may be followed as a preacher; and at court the very Maudlin prigs, we used to laugh at, have got on; —while here——"

"Come," said De Vere, seeing him fall into an uneasy pause, "I will not let you quarrel with a place I am absolutely in love with. One would think Virgil wrote those soft flowing lines here,

> 'Rura mihi et rigui placeant, in vallibus amnes,
> Fluvios amem sylvasque;'"——

"Continue the line," said Archer, briskly, and see how Virgil himself answers for me,

> 'Fluvios amem sylvasque—*Inglorius*.'

'Tis that *inglorious* that makes all the difference.—Yes!" continued he, "the place is well enough, and the boors that surround me are well enough; but shall I confess the truth? such an old friend will not laugh at, nay, he will pity me."

De Vere assured him he would rather sympathize, and begged him to proceed.

"I am tired of them," said Archer. "I am not in my place, and found it out before I had been settled six months."

"Yet I think you took possession in Spring," observed De Vere, looking at the numerous blossoms out of doors.

"True," said Archer, "and for some months I was in rapture, with what is, I allow, very paradisiacal. But still monotony is monotony—I have sat in this window, till I am weary with beholding; and I have thumbed over Theocritus and Virgil, as the appropriate study for such a place, till I knew not what ideas their beautiful language excite. Yet I am afraid of changing

them for Horace or Pope, or Boileau, because they take me into a world from which I feel cut off. I confess to you I never now open a book of philosophy, on the contempt of the world, but I think how bright the world might have been; how much I may have missed; what honour, perhaps profit, certainly pleasure, (the pleasure of good society) and all because I fell in love with retreat, as you call it, without knowing what I was to retreat from."

"Still there is your church," said De Vere, feeling, however, his friend's last remark very pointedly.

"True! but what church? I cannot preach—that is, what I call preach—to the Squire, for he would not understand me; and as for the rest of the congregation, what are the praises of a parcel of old women? Will they lead to a deanery? Will they bring me among the choice spirits of the age, or show me the actors or business of life? No! forgive me, if being a man, I feel I ought to live with men and not with stocks and stones."

As it was neither De Vere's business nor intention to argue with a man who had evidently made a mistake, he did not attempt to reason about the real duty of his calling; but he could not help saying something of the strifes and struggles of the world which he seemed to covet, and the inefficacy of even success to insure happiness.

Archer answered with vivacity, "All very true, I have no doubt; and those who have gone through them might be glad to come here. But *I* have *not* gone through them; I know not even what they are, and cannot judge by other people's senses. Perhaps," added he, with a doubtful smile, and fixing a jaundiced eye on De Vere, "we uninitiated may even think we could do better than those who tell us of their woeful experience. At any rate, we wish for an experience of our own."

"What think you of your parishioner, the honest miller, who showed me the way hither?" asked De Vere.

"What think you of his wife?" said Archer.

"She seems to have the haukering we are talking

of," observed De Vere; "but as for him, he appears the twin brother of his friend of Mansfield, and might sing with him,

> 'How happy a state doth the miller possess,
> Who would be no greater, nor fears to be less!'

How much is said in that last line!"

"'Tis the sum of all content," answered Archer; "and, to tell you the truth, I, his parson, have often proposed him to myself as an object of imitation in my philosophy. But somehow or another I could never make it out. The fellow labours and sings, and sings and labours, nay, has an aspiring wife to keep in good humour, yet is always happy."

"Ought not this to be a lesson to us both?" said De Vere.

"I own it; but I cannot follow it; and you will recollect, honest Gurney has no *ideas*, and, therefore, no wishes beyond Dovedale, while I am like the Abyssinian prince, who was not content with his vale of happiness, till he could compare it with the vale of misery: so, till the world has broke my head, I cannot believe that it intends to do so. In short, I exclaim, with the poor girl in the Tempest, who was told, the first time she saw a man, to beware of him, for he was an evil spirit—

> 'There's nothing ill can dwell in such a temple.
> If the ill spirit have so fair a house,
> Good things will strive to dwell with 't.'"

De Vere found it useless to go on, and, indeed, to say truth, had no such fixed or definite notions himself upon the subject, as to give him a right to be oracular. Archer had made him turn his eyes into his own bosom. He saw that the most beautiful retreat on earth was no asylum to those who had not earned, or were not prepared for it, and he resolved jealously to task himself upon all the theories and fancies which had before taken possession of him.

His horses had now descended the hill above Dove-

dale, and he took leave of his friend, somewhat wiser himself, and leaving *him* somewhat happier, for this passing visit.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The roof of this court is too high to be your's.
SHAKSPEARE.

It wanted still two or three miles to Castle Mowbray, and De Vere pushed on to save the dusk. He had not even determined where to lodge; whether to take that liberty with his uncle, with whom (and almost with Constance) he now felt upon form; or to put up for the night at a little inn which he knew to be in the neighbourhood. A quarter of an hour's riding brought him in sight of the object of his pilgrimage; the castle opening upon him as he turned the brow of an opposite hill, in the boldest, broadest relief from the setting sun.

He checked his pace to prolong the feast of his eye, and felt his moral eye still more interested in ruminating upon the power of Him who made the glory he beheld. By degrees the great planet had sunk, but the horizon was still burnished in beautiful splendour, while closer to him every thing had melted into shade and softness. Never were more beautifully exemplified those charming lines,

"While through the west, where sinks the crimson day,
Meek twilight slowly sails, and waves her banners gray."

He now began to ascend the eminence on which Castle Mowbray was situated, and while he revolved all the gay scenes that had passed there during the summer, (the throng of visitors, and the pleasures of social conversation with many he had loved,) he was struck with the deserted air, the silence, and almost melancholy of the place. This was increased by the stillness of the evening, in which every thing was un-

ruffled, and not a bough or a leaf but seemed buried in rest, as well as their feathered inhabitants. Of these, not even a trace of existence appeared, except in now and then a single chirp from some straggler that had arrived late, and was nestling itself to repose.

The comparison struck forcibly upon the mind of De Vere, and did not dissipate the train of ideas which had got possession of him. There are, indeed, few contrasts more marked than that of a large and ample mansion, which we have been accustomed to see peopled through all its halls and chambers, and every thing full of life; and the same mansion, on our return to it after absence, deserted; the master flown, the subordinates dispersed, and the instruments of pleasure or service entirely withdrawn. Such now appeared to De Vere the whole region of Castle Mowbray. Where all had resounded with jollity, there was silence; where there had been nothing but motion, nothing moved; where every window had been illuminated, all was dark.

The first thing that made him feel the change was the deserted state of the park-lodges. The gates that had used to fly open at his approach, were close locked, and no keeper at hand to give him entrance. He had, therefore, to go round by a rough back way to the now empty court-yard, which had so often thundered with the rattling of wheels.

He passed through a wicket, (the great gates being here also barred,) and found the pavement already overgrown with weeds. He called in vain for some chance assistance, where at least a dozen grooms and helpers had usually been on the watch; and as none came, he himself tried the doors of several stables before he found one that yielded. This was what was called the post-horse stable, which had only bails for stalls; and being calculated for full twenty cattle, we may suppose how lost, and almost forlorn, his two poor steeds appeared. Though almost summer, they shivered in their cold ranges, where not a remnant of fodder could be detected, and their shivering seemed to be caught by the feelings of De Vere. He sent his man to the house in search of help, and throwing his own great coat over his pretty mare—

"*It* was not thus, Beauty," said he, "that you

were used to be treated, in this once hospitable place."

The thought, somehow or another, communicated itself to his own situation, and, strange as it may appear, from the peculiar associations which it brought along with it, this little circumstance affected the whole frame of his mind. He felt a gloom—a sort of want of support, unusual to his nerves; nor did he like to quit Beauty, who had been such a favourite with the heiress of the place, and now seemed the only friend he had left, where once he had almost commanded.

The return of his man announced to him that there was little chance of comfort in the castle if he remained there the night. The house-keeper had gone on a visit to her friends at Uttoxeter, and the rest of the servants had all sallied out to a neighbouring fair, whence they were not expected till the return of daylight. In short, there was nobody left in the whole place but old Robin the keeper, who was laid up by illness, and whose wife kept watch with him, till the truant servants should return.

"To tell the truth, your honour," said De Vere's groom, (a sober, middle-aged campaigner, who had lived with the General,) "I am not sorry for it. I speak not for myself, for I could easily stow in Robin's room; but I don't think her ladyship," (meaning Lady Eleanor,) "would be pleased with a damp bed for your honour; and I am sure you would not like Sweepstakes, let alone Beauty, to catch their deaths, or be bitten by the rats in that post-horse stable."

"You say true, Ralph," said De Vere, "and indeed my call here is untimely; so take the poor things to the Fox, down the hill, and bespeak me a bed; I will follow on foot."

He did so, but not till he had rejoiced Robin by a visit of inquiry. The old man, who was recovering, became garrulous with pleasure, though his garrulity was chiefly occupied with descanting on the difference between the castle now, and what it was when the family were down. De Vere felt this rather more than Robin, yet felt an impulse, for which he could scarcely account, to visit the abandoned chambers which had so lately been the abode of hospitality and pleasure. He, however, penetrated no farther than the armoury,

where the helmets and banderolls seemed to frown upon him, and gave him any thing but welcome. One figure in particular, which from bearing his supposed armour, went by the name of the Duke of Norfolk, seemed, as he thought, in the last gleam of the dusk, to gloom heavily upon him. He laughed at himself for the thought, and opened one or two doors where once he remembered feasting and song; but all now struck him as desolate, and he hastened to make his retreat. In doing so, he had to pass the room where the masque had been represented, and it rather disconcerted him.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed he, "that this should have ever been the court of the Queen of Arcadia!"

The sword of the Duke seemed here to point most meaningly to the door, which shutting with some force, a solemn echo ascended to the vaulted roof of the hall; and this echo was returned several times by the distant galleries and chambers above. It added something like awe to the excitement of his mind, and in the humour he was in, nerves less firm than his might have been affected by it. As it was, it left him at least disconsolate, if not melancholy.

"I hope," said he, as he repassed the wicket of the court-yard—"I hope this is not ominous. Yet there were times when evil might be portended from such a reception. To-morrow I will try the dairy-house; my dear Constance used there——alas! what right have I to apply that term to her?—The heiress of Mowbray is the Queen of Arcadia no longer; she has complied with my own advice, and fixed her temple in 'the bustle of resort.'"

These thoughts did not please, and he hurried through the park and descended the hill in darkness. For though the moon was near her full, and he implored her to cheer him, (which, whatever his reflections, she could almost always do,) she was then dark to him and silent,

"Hid in her vacant interlunar cave."

As he was, however, familiar with the way, he proceeded down the hill in safety, stopping every now and then to inhale the odours emitted by the

springing herbage—a refreshment to his parched senses, which he much needed, and much enjoyed.

By the time he had reached the Fox, De Vere had asked himself one or two rather important questions, which the reader, indeed, may before this, have asked for him. One of them, not the least important was, what business he had at the castle—and why he went so far out of his way, merely, as it should seem, to call up melancholy recollections and hopeless visions?

It was a question he could not answer. If any one blame him, I will not be the person to argue the matter; but leave him to the praise-worthy prudence which stops to calculate profit and loss before it allows itself to feel. Nor, if he censure a heart for getting brim full before it settle the consequences of overflowing, will I say that it is not wise in him to do so. Yet for all that, I cannot be angry with De Vere.

The moon had now broken through the fleece of clouds which had hitherto obscured her, and the mirth of several straggling parties coming from the fair, might have diverted him from his musing on the cold reception which the castle of his uncle had seemed to give him. Some of these parties were singing, some laughing and shouting, all of them careless, none uncivil. If their jollity displayed no mental happiness, it discovered no discontent. To be sure, he that is drunk, they say, is as great as a king; and many of these were at least as great as princes. But there was a tone of pleased existence among them, which a lover of human nature would have been glad to observe. Now and then a girl's voice was heard floating, at first alone on the air, in the stanza of a quaint ballad; and this was followed by five or six deeper voices roaring the burden in chorus. The open air softened the roughness, and dignified the want of skill of these chanters as they came close to De Vere. After they had passed, as the distance increased, the sounds died gradually away, and were succeeded by the shriller notes of a tabor and pipe, which occupied a set of dancers at the inn below.

"These good people," said De Vere, as he slackened his pace to listen and moralize, "cannot be unhappy, if they are not positively in a state of happiness. But the feeling is negative—they have no sensibilities."

A few stragglers at that moment passed, one of whom in a female voice, articulately, and not meanly, sang an air which was just then very popular all over England.

> "How blest the maid whose bosom
> No headstrong passion knows."

"That may be the true secret," said De Vere, as she went by. "I begin to believe that the less heart we have, the better the chance of happiness. For may not happiness after all, be characterised as the absence of uneasiness, rather than positive pleasure?"

With this profound reflection, and in a most philosophical train of thought, he lost himself in reverie, till the concourse of people whom he met, night-wandering from the fair, began to make him fear that he might fail in his expectation of the lodging which he had ordered his groom to secure for him; and on arriving at the Fox, he found his fears were realized.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A RENCONTRE.

> That light we see,
> Is burning in my hall.
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

> Your accent is something finer than you could purchase in so removed a dwelling.
>
> SHAKSPEARE.

DE VERE found that the inn which he thought was to give him shelter was filled with the "rude swilled insolence of these late wassailers;" and the landlord, after many expressions of concern, assured him of the impossibility of giving him accommodation.

De Vere, however, was not only young enough not

yet to take much thought of personal inconvenience, but his mind was full; and one effect of being under the influence of an absorbing interest, is to make most others sink in the comparison. He had ridden fifty miles that day, and the topics of reflection which had employed him, had made his mind stand in need of rest, still more than his body; yet he heard the sentence of banishment passed upon him, without a murmur, though a pampered minion of the world, arriving in his travelling carriage, and thus disappointed, would have complained, and execrated his hard fortune, though he might only have had to proceed a stage farther to a comfortable inn. As it was, De Vere was not only careless of his situation, but seemed disposed to gaze on the rustic, and certainly not very refined scene, that was going forward. From all the rooms of the Fox, was heard the sound "of riot and ill-mannered merriment." And at another time, perhaps, he could not have borne to look at the loose hinds who made it, "thanking the gods amiss."

Many a hoarse cadence saluted his ear; many a practical joke his eye. Yet, with a heart full of feelings appertaining even to sadness, and thinking of her who was the very queen of elegance, he stopped a few moments to contemplate, we will not say to be amused with, this coarse undress of nature. We cannot account for this, except that he was glad of any occurrence that could divert him from himself. Upon the same principle, that he who best understood the heart's most paradoxical seeming, makes Hamlet, with his mind full of high purpose, stop to find pastime in arguing with a grave-digger.

In sooth, it is not more extraordinary than true, that even while the soul is absorbed with some great predominant subject, we are not always indisposed to throw away a moment upon objects which we might otherwise despise.

But a very few minutes gave De Vere quite enough of these boors; and though he was not in the best humour with the grandees of the world, and thought even humble moderation preferable to the passions he had witnessed among those who were considered as the

lords of life, he found that it was not among the dregs of it he was to seek consolation. He turned, therefore, from the inn, and after hearing that Ralph and his horses could be taken care of, moved off on foot, literally to seek his fortune for the night.

He had not proceeded far, before a brisk step sounded behind him, and as brisk a voice sang out a verse of the old song of—

> "And why should we quarrel for riches,
> Or any such glittering toys?
> A light heart, and a thin pair of breeches,
> Will go through the world, my brave boys!"

The sort of jolly sincerity of the singer, in giving this philosophical verse, would have struck De Vere at any time; but the stillness of the night, and the reflective humour he had been in during the day, made him peculiarly alive to it, and he turned to observe the traveller, who had now saluted him, and seemed not unwilling to become his companion. He was what you call a hale, well built man, of an open physiognomy, and appeared by the moon's pale light, between forty and fifty years of age. His whole air, as well as step, denoted ease with himself, and good humour with all the world. De Vere, from the same sort of disposition we have just noticed, to allow minor things to divert an occupied mind, replied to his address with civility, not unmixed with curiosity. For the manner and language of the pedestrian seemed rather above his dress, which was that of a servant, though not in livery; and, from the gold binding round his hat, and his leather gaiters, (though in those times, this did not prove much,) it might be a question, whether he was a gentleman or a gentleman's game-keeper. De Vere thought him the latter, and his notion was confirmed by observing a large spaniel, superb of his species, that followed close at his heels, from which he did not stir an inch, altering his pace from quick to slow, and slow to quick, and crossing the road exactly as his master changed his course.

De Vere observed upon the seeming attachment and fidelity of the animal.

"Nay, it is more than seeming," said his new companion, "I wish we could all of us boast as much honesty as this brute; I wish we could say with the shepherd in the fable,

> "I love his true and faithful way,
> And, in my service, copy Tray."

De Vere felt his curiosity more and more awakened by this little moral ebullition of his new acquaintance, who kept walking on at a brisk pace; when, after a few minutes' pause, the stranger bethought him of that question, which in England is generally the first with which one traveller accosts another, and without farther preface, asked De Vere where he was going?

"I wish I could tell you," replied he; "but the truth is, except that I am in search of a bed, in any hospitable farm-house I can find, I do not know *where* I am going."

"A stranger perhaps in these parts," said the other, inquiringly.

"Not absolutely," returned De Vere, "but still so much so, as not exactly to know how to shape my course to my object."

"Leave that to me," cried his companion, with heartiness. "You are young and stout, and if you can walk a couple of miles farther, you will find an old hall that will not shut its door upon you, I'll answer it."

De Vere expressed his thanks, and it being an absolute matter of necessity, and moreover, being much pleased with his fellow-traveller, he accepted the offer.

"You live there, of course," said De Vere.

"I do," answered the stranger, "and you shall sup like a prince."

The moon was silver bright; there was a soft buxom feel in the air; and the two new acquaintances proceeded cheerfully together, towards their destination. By degrees the guide deviated from the high road, and traversing a meadow, spread over with tedded grass, and exhaling scents which he seemed to suck in at his

mouth as well as his nostrils, he asked De Vere if he had ever been in London?

"I am not three days from it," answered De Vere.

"I fancy there is not much in it like this," said his fellow-traveller, and he took up a handful of hay which emitted perfumes that were delicious.

"Not much," returned De Vere, uncertain in what manner to shape the conversation.

"Nor these woods," added the keeper (if we may call him so), "nor that brook, that sings so sweet of a summer's night."

"We have the Thames," said De Vere, affecting an air of superiority.

"O! ay!" replied the stranger, "but it is fuller of ships than of wild ducks, and I can't abide ships and trade, and all that."

"You have been in London, then?" returned De Vere, somewhat amused.

The stranger immediately changed his tone. "Why, yes," said he, "once, and more was my bad luck, and somebody else's too."

At these words, a deep sigh half amounting to a groan, escaped him, and he strode on before, in a silence of some minutes, till they passed through a wood, and then a succession of fields. They then began to ascend a hill, from which the gleaming of lights showed inhabitancy, and De Vere began to think they were in the domain of some rural thane, whose house could not be far off.

This was soon put out of doubt, by the appearance of an old garden-wall, a gate in which was opened by the stranger, and they found themselves in a bowling-green, bounded on three sides by a yew-tree hedge, cut very close and thick. On the fourth was the gable end of an antiquated house, seemingly covered to the very chimnies with ivy. There was a new wing, however, consisting of two or three rooms, with modern sashed windows, but all the rest were casements at least as old as the Tudors.

De Vere now began to be uneasy, from the fear that he had made a mistake in following his leader to a place not his own; but his hope was that his good-na-

tured companion, being left in charge of an empty mansion, had allotted a spare chamber in it to him for the night, in the absence of the owner. What then was his surprise, when, apologizing for leaving him for a minute, the stranger said he must go and inform his master of his arrival, who, he would answer for it, would be glad to give him a bed, and a supper too. De Vere felt distressed; but before he could utter a word, the man had disappeared through a side door into a court yard, where the noise of half a dozen dogs, greeting his return, shewed signs of a family esblishment which our traveller was any thing but pleased to think of.

He was disposed even to retire, when his new friend returned with a lad wearing a livery he had somewhere seen, and bearing a lanthorn to conduct him through the offices; and his guide then delivered him a message in form from his master, who had desired him to say he should be welcome to any thing that Okeover Hall could afford for his accommodation. This was said with the smile of one who had succeeded in a negotiation, not to mention a bow of protection and ceremony mixed, as if the speaker had now a right to assume some authority. With an air, therefore, of command, he cried to the lad with the lanthorn—"Lead the way in, Jack!" and De Vere felt he could not help following, however unwilling to intrude.

As they crossed the hall, the keeper, or Major Domo, as we will now call him, pointing to two immense doors of black oak, well barred for the night, apologized in the name of his master for not receiving him at the great gate; but all was so unexpected.

Farther inquiry was stopped, by the appearance of the master himself, who issued from what seemed to be a library, and with a natural frankness, mixed, however, with a little shyness of countenance, said he was welcome to Okeover.

"My servant Gorblestone," added the gentleman, "says you are benighted."

De Vere returned a suitable compliment, but added excuses for an unintended intrusion, in which he was most sincere. "I thought your servant," said he, "a

keeper in some forest lodge, of which I have seen a few sometimes in this country; and did not imagine I was breaking in upon any gentleman's privacy."

The gentleman assured him he had done so most agreeably; and, struck with De Vere's manners, his erect carriage, and intelligent as well as ingenuous countenance, he added, "I should have been sorry if Gorblestone had known me so little as to suppose I would deny hospitality to any one who wanted it. But, in this instance, I shall owe him thanks. From your account, however, it should seem that you have at least been in this country before."

De Vere was not slow to tell his host who he was, and expressed his wonder at having passed the whole summer at his uncle's, without seeing him at the castle, or at least in his frequent rides discovering his mansion.

"As to my mansion," said the gentleman, "you see it is so far out of high roads, that unless you sought it on purpose, it is not easily discovered; and as to myself, from my habits, I go so little into company, that probably if I had been here I should not have attended the castle party; but I was in fact absent in a distant county during almost the whole summer and autumn too."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE MAN OF CONTENT.

This night he dedicates
To fair content and you.

SHAKSPEARE.

We will have a last year's pippin of my own graffing, with a dish of carroways and so forth, and then to bed.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE master of Okeover showed no change in his behaviour on learning the quality and connexions of

his guest. He received the intimation of them with seeming pleasure, but no surprise; and De Vere was pleased to find himself, though so strangely introduced, in company with a man of natural and acquired good breeding, which a seemingly long retirement had scarcely been able to affect, much less to eradicate. The supper was simple but delicate. Gorblestone, who commanded in the larder, as well as every where else, had laid a virgin cloth, on which he had served up a cold chicken, with young peas of the greenest hue, a bowl of new milk, a cream cheese, and butter which, as Gray says of his landlady's, in Borrowdale, Sisera would have jumped at.

During the repast, they were waited upon by the attentive Mr. Gorblestone: for attentive he was, not merely to their table wants, but to every word of their conversation; in which, though he never departed from the sort of affectionate respect he showed his master, he more than once seemed not indisposed to join. For like Davy he served his master for good uses; "he was his serving-man, and his husbandman:" nor would we swear, but for the presence of De Vere, that there would not have been a regular dialogue between master and man, about "sowing the headland with wheat," or a "new link to the bucket." We will not go on to say that Mr. Gorblestone would have thought he had a right, "once or twice or twice in a quarter, to bear out a knave against an honest man, with his worship." But as to conversation, he once or twice ventured to give his opinion, particularly when his master commended to his guest, some ale of John's own brewing, and enlarged afterwards, as the discourse led to it, upon the happy interest of a person who had all things within himself. John coincided heartily with his master, and observed it was better than to be a king, who had every thing to buy.

"I remember," said De Vere, perceiving that a little colloquy with this favoured domestic, would not be taken amiss, "you told me you could not abide ships or trade."

"I only meant," said Gorblestone, bowing and hoping no offence, "ships and trade from over sea.

For trade in barges along our own rivers, is all right. It is the ships that have made so many upstarts in the country, which my poor first master knew to his cost, for it was the new people that brought in the new king."

Here the good host, looking grave, as if he gave no encouragement, Gorblestone discontinued, and asked leave to make a bowl of cup, observing that the new lemons were remarkably juicy, and the burrage this year remarkably fragrant. At the same time, he wished, for the honour of England, that lemons could grow in an English garden, or that cup could be made without them.

De Vere, somewhat amused, asked what he would do for sugar?

"There is nothing, your honour," replied John, holding the door in his hand, as he was about to retire, "like the good old English sugar, called honey. We have the finest show of bees this year ever remembered."

When he had quitted the room, De Vere observing upon his intelligence and zeal, his master expressed his hope that he would forgive his officiousness.

"In truth," said he, "it is much my own fault, as he is not only clever in his various stations, but I believe sincerely attached to me; and as he never makes his familiarity disrespectful, I find him sometimes a companion not unamusing to the solitude of my life. It is fit I should tell you he has one very decided cast of character, now fast wearing out in this country; for he is one of the few thorough-paced Jacobites, whom the virtues of the family on the throne have not yet been able to win from the Stuarts. Indeed, he has more than ordinary calls upon his heart for this, and may be forgiven: for he set out in 1745, as a groom to the unfortunate Townley, with whom he was taken at Preston, and with whom he was tried and condemned in London. He was pardoned from his insignificance, but the death of his master he has never forgotten, and never will forgive. Whigism, therefore, is his abomination, and as commercial people are generally Whigs, they, and commerce itself, are equally out of favour.

In other respects he is an excellent creature, and I could, perhaps, even as a humble companion, ill exchange him for many a better-bred person."

De Vere was moved with this picture, and said he could almost envy him.

"Almost as much," added he, "as I am disposed to envy the quiet of his master's solitude, even at my time of life, when, as is supposed, the world has, or ought to have, a right to all our interests."

"That is no more than true," returned the gentleman, "and I should hope (though you have too much pensiveness on your brow for your age) that you have no disposition to renounce these interests. I assure you, though I live out of the world, I am by no means out of humour with it, and seem to return to it with pleasure, whenever a man like yourself comes to visit me."

De Vere bowed, and observed, that with the occupations which evidently employed him, his solitude could never be dull; he only wondered that, knowing the world as he seemed to do, and not angry with it, as he had just professed, he should have so soon quitted it.

"I am not so young as you take me for," replied the gentleman, "but health and a contented disposition will do much for a man. I thank God, I love my species, collectively and individually; nor do I think that because there are some knaves among them, the majority are not honest or benevolent."

De Vere drew his chair closer to the table, and was all attention at this speech. It forboded, as he hoped, something that might fall in with those speculations on mankind, which, young as he was, had lately so absorbed him.

"If it were not the most impertinent thing in the world," said he, "and could I encourage myself to hope for it, from the frankness and kindness you have shown me, it would complete the gratification I have met with to-night, could I be favoured with the reasons which have inclined you to a way of life, at least uncommon, if not unaccountable. At any rate, I hope I

may know the name of the person who so much obliges me."

"I have no secrets," replied the gentleman, "nor is there a reason against a formal compliance with your request, except the total want of incident in my, I fear, useless life; useless to others, though, if I have avoided the temptations of the world by it, it has not been so to myself. My name is Flowerdale, and if you know a baronet of that name in London you are acquainted with my brother."

De Vere blessed himself as in surprise, intimating that he knew Sir William Flowerdale extremely well, and that he even felt under many obligations to him.

"At the same time," said he, "I should have studied long before I could have discovered you to be relations, from any family resemblance. There seems as little similarity of tastes, or, if you will allow me to say so, of character. You are, at least, greatly his junior."

"By ten years," answered the host.

"I should have said more."

"That is because the smoky place which he inhabits, and chuses to prefer to these breezy hills, to say nothing of the care and fatigue of waiting on other men's looks, have, I suppose, oldened him. But I have not seen him these fifteen years, and it is five more since I have been in London. In other respects we are good brothers: he writes me sometimes the news of the town, regularly supplies me with the Gazette, and I supply him with game. I believe, however, he thinks me a mere country put, and as he will indubitably die in harness himself, is convinced that nobody can live happily out of it."

De Vere thought he did not by any means do justice to Sir William, who, he said, was a gentleman of great prudence, and highly esteemed by all parties.

"Why ay," said Mr. Flowerdale, "it is that prudence that always gave, or seemed to give, him the advantage over me, even more than his age. Our friends used to wish I could take a lesson from him, when I called London a prison which I should not like, though the king were my gaoler."

"But if *he* like it!" observed De Vere.

"I am answered," said Mr. Flowerdale: "a man can but be pleased, and we cannot, indeed ought not, to be all alike. And yet I cannot help sometimes thinking that we are not made to be wedded for better for worse to a toilsome office; nor do I wish to suppose that, as age advances, we may not be something better than one of those old politicians, who

'Chew on wisdom past,
And totter on in business to the last.'

Yes! yes! we are made for better things than this."

"And yet," said De Vere, "as far as I have observed, (even already) it is a nice question whether a man of what we call trammels, when once fixed, can change for the better; at least he may make an ill exchange for a liberty which he does not know how to use."

"That observation," said Flowerdale, looking at him, "is, with submission, what ought to be beyond your experience. But if true, (which I fear it is,) that happiness is little more than merely mechanical, there is this difference between the man who shakes off trammels to enjoy his mind, and him who 'totters on in business to the last,' that the one consults the dignity of his nature, and acts up to it, while the other reduces himself, at best, to contented mechanism. Take, for example, the man who makes his leisure busy by contemplation, and him who lives in such constant business as to have no leisure but for bodily refreshment. Each may be happy, but whose happiness is the nobler of the two? The one lives and converses with his God;—the other with his club."

De Vere by no means disliked a sentiment to which, young as he was, he was naturally inclined, but which, from late trials, had begun to take a still stronger hold on him; and, struck with the easy look of content of his landlord, to say nothing of the brilliant health which belonged to it, he asked him if it were possible that he could have remained during the twenty years he spoke of, shut up in the spot where he now dwelt?"

"Not only possible, but true," replied Mr. Flowerdale: "for it is just that time since I came to the certain knowledge of what would content me, after a thousand petty disappointments in the things which would not."

"An enviable acquisition," observed De Vere; "and I wish I had your secret."

"At your time of life," replied Flowerdale, "I would be sorry you stood in need of it. There is, however, no secret except this: *that we know our place*, and do not act as if it were different from what it is. All the rest is plain sailing, and depends upon natural temper and good spirits, or, in better words than mine, a disposition to 'be contented in that state of life to which it has pleased God to call us.'"

"I never heard the catechism better enforced," said De Vere, smiling; "but there must still either be something in your mind different from that of other men, or something felicitous in your history which all other men might envy."

"I fear," returned Mr. Flowerdale, "the mind you compliment is merely made to draw happiness from quietude, and the lesser enjoyments instead of great excitements; my history in regard to events is all negative."

"You lose then, or have never possessed," said De Vere, "the sweet pleasures of prospect."

"Far from it," returned Mr. Flowerdale; "for I thank God, while, from constitution, no man's disappointments ever fell so light upon him, no one ever enjoyed more pleasure from expectation than I have done, and still do. I may be said, emphatically, to have been, and almost now to be, a *man of expectation*, though certainly also a MAN OF CONTENT."

"You move my interest more and more," said De Vere, "and I am glad to learn from this, that you have still the pleasure of some great expectation before you."

"I see I have misled you," replied Flowerdale, "and, indeed, ought not to have expected to be understood by those who don't know me. In truth, were you old enough to be more a man of the world than

you are, I should expect to be laughed at, as I often have been, when I have displayed my treasures of prospect. They are, at least, different from those of most."

"I long to know them," said De Vere."

"You find them at every turn," observed the philosopher (for so we may now call him), "but particularly at this time of the year, or a little earlier, when birds sing, and flowers bud; when corn springs, and our domestic animals bring forth; when every thing, in short, is in the morn and liquid dew of life."

"This is delightful," said De Vere, "and not the less so for being so different from what I expected; for I perceive it is more to the promises of the *natural*, than of the moral world, that you allude. These, indeed, belong to all ages and all stations."

"And seldom disappoint us," added Flowerdale, "or, if they do, we know our consolation, in the submission due to Him who sends so much good, that he can only send evil along with it, for good purposes."

De Vere began to be charmed with his landlord, and begged him to proceed.

"Yes!" he continued, "in this point of view, the woods and fields are the very temple of hope. The infancy, indeed, of every thing, is a treat; and though things always fade, still they are always renewed. The infancy and the hope all pass away, but the certainty of their return does not pass away."

Then turning to the moon, which, now at full, illuminated the supper-room through the windows, he went on: "I have watched that glorious orb, from her first little segment, scarcely streaking the sky, ten or twelve days ago, till now, when I could grow melancholy to think, she will to-morrow be on the wane, were I not sure that in a fortnight more her youth will be renewed. These changes and renewals are the rich presents which the Author of Nature makes us, and occasion us almost to forget that we ourselves grow old."

He stopped, but De Vere was too much pleased to interrupt him by observation, and he went on.

"Hence, the mere morning, ushering in the expectations of the day, delights the *Hoper*, whatever its termination. Hence, too, in more active scenes, I never could see, without pleasure, the opening promise of any of my fellow-beings, before disappointment had checked their alacrity, or given them cause for alarm. How have I watched the joy of a young girl, for example, just come out; the world at her feet, and pleasure in her eye, because she *hoped* it would always be so. How have I rejoiced with a young senator, after his maiden speech; or even a stripling student qualifying himself to make one. These, indeed, have passed away, but others have supplied their places, and wherever I find them, it is still happiness to me to contemplate in them the pleasures of expectation."

De Vere here became grave, and almost cast down, at the thought of what he too had imagined to be happiness, but found so transitory. His host observed it (for he had an eye as quick as it was kind), and said, he feared he might be touching an unpleasant theme, and would change the conversation.

"By no means," cried De Vere, "I am quite interested in this novel catalogue—these pleasures of expectation, and particularly, as you may suppose, those of opening youth."

"Why, yes!" returned Flowerdale, "it is this expectation, as much or even more than the spring and buxomness of the blood, that makes the remembrance of our earlier days delightful, so that they are emphatically called our *beaux jours*. Never shall I forget the time when I first saw Oxford, and the exclamation of an energetic man, with whom I was travelling. He was my guardian, far from young, a man of letters, an eloquent senator, a complete gentleman. He was also, spite of his years, and the excitements of the world (of which he had drank as largely as any one), the greatest of enthusiasts."

"The impressions of such a one," said De Vere, "must be worthy of remembrance."

"It was evening," continued Flowerdale, "when we arrived, and the lamps of the students were twinkling far through the casemented windows of battle-

ments and towers rising among groves, which, to him, had always been sacred. 'Happy men! happy men!' exclaimed he, with fervour: 'the world is all your own: the sciences you are mastering will not only administer eternal good to your minds, but at this moment they make every one of you lords of your wishes.' Then, turning to me, 'I would give much,' said he, 'to witness the progressive effects upon them, of the knowledge they are acquiring; but ten times more for the *hopes* which each acquisition adds to what they had before. They are all big with the fine phrenzy of Cowley:

> 'What shall I do to be for ever known,
> And make the age to come, my own?'*

"Your guardian," observed De Vere, "must have really been blessed with the *mens divinior*; and, for an old man, as you have called him, it is wonderful his enthusiasm could have lasted so long."

"It did, till his dying day," answered Flowerdale; "but there are men whose genius never wears out, and he was one, for his body dropped while his mind was still full of fruit. Our greatest living poet, you know, the author of the Night Thoughts, did not begin them till he was near sixty. Why then should we ever give up the dear pleasures of thought?"

"Your friend, it should seem, never did," said De Vere.

"No; and he had this farther advantage, that although no man had seen more of the strifes of the world, or had more keenly observed its vices or virtues, somehow or another he always contrived to excite himself more by its virtues, than suffer depression by its vices. This is what I love."

"A happy temperament," said De Vere, "and apparently inherited by his pupil."

* From a note in the Manuscript, it is to be presumed, that the anecdote here related, is not of an imaginary being, but of a high-minded statesman, once very dear to his friends.

Mr. Flowerdale bowed and proceeded:—"It certainly formed the happiness of my life, and what is more, for once that I have been deceived in my judgment, I have been a hundred times confirmed in my expectations. This only increased the disposition, which was at one time critical to my fate."

De Vere looking inquiringly, Mr. Flowerdale went on with a pleasure seemingly mixed with melancholy: "Yes; for the mere indication of feelings of kindred with my own, in this respect, decided me, where personal loveliness alone, though equal to the loveliest, might not perhaps have succeeded. It was in coursing the beautiful bank of one of our midland rivers, in a delicious morning in June, so early that the sun had only power to gild, but not to scorch. Our way lay through a succession of happy villages and farms, joyful with *expectation*, and all that *hope* which we have been discussing. The air, the landscape, the coolness of the river, the overhanging woods, the song of the birds, the lowing of cattle, every thing was exhilarating; and men, women, and children seemed to catch the inspiring cheerfulness. A young girl, in whose countenance every thought of my own mind played, stood up, and almost dancing even in the carriage, cried out, as it drove briskly over the smooth road—'The world is a nice place!'

"I could have danced too, and taking her hand, I echoed her. 'Yes,' said I, 'the world *is* a nice place; and if this be the world, I have no wish to quit it.'

"We two *expectants* afterwards married; and after a lapse of years, passed this very road again; and though we were neither of us then ready to dance in a landau, or call out, 'the world is a nice place,' yet we were not tired of it either. We had only exchanged buoyancy of spirits, for happiness more tranquil. In short, so just as well as benevolent is the Author of all, that there is a happiness for all if we please; and I mention these passages merely to mark the *changes*, not the *misfortunes*, of time. Enjoy, then, your youth and spirits while you can. They will not wait for you. Yet even if you do not catch them as they pass, you

may still turn to other pleasures, if you do not cast yourself away."

"Your lesson is charming," said De Vere, his countenance brightening for the first time that day. For there was something so sweet in the philosophy of his host, that he could not help catching a portion of it; and he felt almost ashamed of the gloom which had depressed him. What Mr. Flowerdale, however, had just told him, moved his curiosity, or rather his interest, still more. He hoped for an hostess, yet was afraid to ask, and turned for the first time to the picture of an animated female, which in all the vivacity of Sir Joshua's earlier manner, hung over the chimney, in an excellent light

Neither gentlemen spoke for some moments. De Vere was obviously suppressing inquiry; which Mr. Flowerdale perceiving, with a placid seriousness, evidently the effect of habitual resignation, he observed,

"You are right in your conjecture; the face you behold is of her whom I have just mentioned, and who, for near twenty years, gladdened my life. It is six years since I lost her; it was the only misery I ever felt; nor can I be too grateful that God, in taking her from me, gave me the grace to be far more impressed with his bounty in sparing her to me so long, than the ingratitude of repining that he chose so soon to remove her."

De Vere, feeling for the emotions he had unintentionally caused, would have turned to other pictures.

"You need not do this," said Mr. Flowerdale. "I who contemplate that portrait morning, noon, and night, can well bear to talk of it. 'Tis a countenance which speaks to me still, and I can now let others speak of it."

"Your equanimity and resignation do the heart good," said De Vere, much moved. "Would that many of those I have just left behind me, could witness and profit by them as I hope I shall."

Both gentlemen had risen, and De Vere could not help here grasping the hand of his host with a warmth approaching almost to attachment.

"I will not ask," continued he, "after any of the

disappointments which you say you have experienced. Bearing this as you have, every thing else must have fallen an easy conquest before that delightful frame of mind, which nature seems to have given you, and to be born with which is, I perceive, truer happiness than to be the possessor of millions."

"Neither wealth nor power," returned Flowerdale, "were ever very essential objects with me, though I sought them both. As to the misfortune we have glanced at," continued he, again eyeing the picture, "a perfect reliance on the wisdom, and perfect submission to the will of Heaven, enabled me alone to support it. Nor did I change my place, or fly from any memorial of her, to recover my cheerfulness. On the contrary, it was soothing to me to keep her, in all her avocations, constantly before me. I knew all the sources of her pleasures, and found out all her little charities; and, by making these my own, and perpetually thinking how she loved them—in short, by giving her in idea a perpetual presence, I found that relief which others can only find by banishing such things from their memories. For my part, I felt her enshrined in my heart; and it was not by unseating her there, that I found I could make that heart the lighter."

The two companions here again paused, and De Vere, who had begun to conceive a high veneration for his host, in addition to the good-will he had from the first conciliated, respected him too much to interrupt his reflections.

At length Mr. Flowerdale broke the course of his own thought.

"Come," said he, "you want to know the nature of my disappointments. None of them were very heart-breaking. In love I had succeeded, and of the other great passion of ambition, I had, in reality, too little, to make them, even to myself, other than what they were to others—ridiculous."

"Ridiculous!" exclaimed De Vere. "They are not so held in the places I have left."

"Because," said Flowerdale, "the passion as you have witnessed it, was probably strong. And there *is this* peculiarity attending it, that from the impetus it

gives to exertion, often generous, always strenuous, what was meant to be a virtue, may become a vice, and sometimes a horrible one, before any one, and least of all ourselves, perceive it. When this is so, nothing presses light upon it. Luckily I had so little of it in my composition, or I had schooled myself so well in independence——" He paused.

"Ay!" cried De Vere, "it is that which I want to come to. To bear with dignity the insults, the cajolery, the falsehoods you may have met with—!"

"I met with nothing of the sort," returned Flowerdale. "I simply did not succeed where, as I took no pains, I perhaps did not deserve to do so. In truth, I was indolent, and justly punished."

"I am eager to learn how you will make this out," said De Vere.

"I like your earnestness," observed Flowerdale, "but you will be disappointed in your expectation of adventures, where I have merely to show my unfitness to undertake them. My brother gave me precepts enough, but I could not follow them, and, as I have hinted, the blunders I made were ridiculous. I never could listen to a long story, even from a patron, if I thought it a dull one. A vile fit of yawning on such an occasion lost me one great man's countenance; the asserting my opinion too powerfully in argument, another's. A third, who wished to publish a pamphlet, asked my free criticism of it, and I made so free a one that I was set down as a blockhead ever afterwards. What is worse, though I had been in the habit of dining with him often, I never thenceforward was invited. I complained to my brother, and he talked to me of Voltaire, who lost the friendship of the King of Prussia because (to use his own expression) he was tired of washing dirty linen; by which he meant, correcting the king's bad poetry. My brother prophesied that I should succeed as ill as Voltaire, and he was right. I might, perhaps, have got on in diplomacy, but for an unfortunate taste in music and drawing."

"How," cried De Vere, "could such charming faculties interfere with you?"

"I was sent, by my brother's interest, a little secre-

tary to a little German court. One of the princesses was fond of performing in private concerts, and observing that my ear was very true, insisted upon knowing my opinion of her singing. I told her very plainly the truth. She had science, but no voice, and sang out of tune. She never forgave me; but this did me no harm, till her brother, the reigning prince, who had a love for building palaces after his own designs, submitted one to me for examination, and I pointed out a gross fault in perspective. The court reception became immediately cold, and soon after I was recalled, I knew not why."

"What said your brother?" asked De Vere.

"He sent me the history of Lewis XIV. with the leaf doubled down where the rise of Mansard is described. The great architect, it seems, often *consulted* the king, and sent him beautiful plans and elevations, which would all have been perfect to the minutest particular, except that there was always some one error left, sufficiently gross for the king to correct, and then it came out with a royal emendation. I was not so wise as Mansard. But the abuse of princes, like other general abuse, is a mistake. I have found worth, probity, and even sincerity among courtiers themselves, and the very patrons I had offended had their good qualities, which I did not respect the less because I had blundered myself out of their favour. Was I to condemn them, or *all* the great together, because they might be vain, like myself and all the rest of the world? No! I had myself no spleen because they were not angels. In fact, I soon discovered that almost all characters were mixed. I laughed at the nonsense, but loved the good which I found in them, and I found a great deal. As I have told you, I was not out of humour with the world."

"Yet you quitted it?"

"I quitted London, but not the world; and I did this only to take possession of an estate which gave me a life so agreeable, that without the restraint of what would have been a very foolish resolution about the country, I never returned to town. By this time I was married, and my happiness at home made me indiffer-

ent to every thing abroad. In my wife's mind, I found my own reflected, but I also found that a wife whom I loved, and who loved *me*, did not add to the activity or ambition of a man, not naturally active or ambitious. There was, however, another qualification (if I may so call it,) which enabled me to retire without that hankering after what one has left behind, which is sometimes the cause of unaccountable disappointment."

"Your qualifications," said De Vere.

"I had seen almost all ranks and conditions of men," answered Flowerdale; "and though I by no means say that they disappointed me, on the contrary, many high characters raised my opinion of them still higher, and it is my delight to pay them this tribute, yet—"

Here he paused, as if doubtful how to express his meaning.

"Yet, what?" asked De Vere.

"My curiosity, or rather that restlessness, which most of us, or at least most ambitious persons feel, to contemplate the leading characters of the world,—this was satisfied."

"So soon?" said De Vere.

"Why, yes! nor set me down either as too presumptuous, or too indifferent on this account. As to presumption, I by no means am of opinion with the insolent, self-admiring Swift, who used to say, that an acquaintance with great men was only interesting while it was a vanity, and that familiarity, therefore, destroyed its value. Nor do I think, with the same cynic, that so little genius is necessary for a statesman, that there ought to be always even something of the alderman in his composition. This is the mere sauciness of a man who was an absolute peacock about courts and nobles; one who, with no natural right to it, was

> 'Of an unbounded stomach, ever ranking
> Himself with princes.'"

"And yet," observed De Vere, "we may remember a higher man than Swift, even the chancellor of a great king, and great queen, who, in instructing his son, tells him, '*An nescis, mi fili, quanticula sapien-*

tia mundus regitur.' And this sentiment is echoed by the sensible and modest Arbuthnot, who was fond of quoting it."

"That," replied Flowerdale, "may do in times so easy that they may be said to govern themselves; but in difficulties, nothing so false; and we idlers ought to venerate those wise and active spirits, who protect us at the expense of their own peace, with no other reward than their own glory."

De Vere wondered still more, with this opinion of public men, that his host should so soon be satisfied with his acquaintance with them.

"I had, as I observed," replied Flowerdale, "that sort of irritating desire to see and know the great professions, and those who are their ornaments, which, while a man feels condemned by the mere inferiority of his lot, to be for ever removed from them, leaves him with I know not what sort of imaginary admiration, almost amounting to envy. This is only aggravated, if his lot be too obscure to render his approach to them easy; and the more generous and aspiring the disposition, the more discontented, perhaps, the spirit which thus languishes. Here, indeed, a voyage of discovery to the unknown land, may be of the greatest use, by sending us home again with our imaginations undeceived."

"You profited, no doubt, by this interesting voyage," said De Vere.

"I certainly learned," replied Flowerdale, "only to think those men great, who were really so from the superiority of their talents and virtues, and those stations dazzling, which were administered by such men. I thank Heaven, the country possessed enough of them to command all my admiration; while my proximity to the other varieties of mere show and glitter,—little men like myself, and not at all the greater for office, by teaching me their true value, dispelled all ignorant hankering to mix with them. It was this that fitted me for the quiet, which, without disparaging other tastes, I felt to be mine."

"I understand you," said De Vere. "Had you never emerged from the obscurity of a college, or the

haunts of middle life, you might, by thinking that all who were above you were, from that mere circumstance, surrounded with enchantment, have been still restless and unhappy."

"Exactly so."

"But how," continued De Vere, with curiosity, "did you settle it with yourself, in regard to those beings who you allow were so superior?"

"In the same way," replied Flowerdale, "as I settled it that I was not an angel. I *knew* my inferiority, and was reconciled to it. It was only the *enchanted* palace, not the real one, which I destroyed by visiting it. While I was kept out by mounds and gates, guarded by the giants of fancy, who impeded my approach, I could not prevent the workings of imagination, and I figured a thousand pleasures within, which it made me melancholy to believe I was forbidden to think of. '*Major e longinquo reverentia,*' says the maxim. But, the spell once broken, the illusion vanished. Thus, to leave allegory, while I found the really great men, so much greater than myself, as to prevent all envy, I found the rest too little different from myself to give me a thought; and this is what I meant by saying my curiosity was satisfied."

"You have made this out completely," observed De Vere, "and it only adds to my envy of that perfect independence of mind, equally removed from pride and indifference, which I never met with till now."

"I am by no means sure," replied Flowerdale, "that pride had not a considerable share in the philosophy for which you are pleased to give me credit. For when I became master of Okeover, and beheld these old halls and blazoned windows, which record, as I will show you to-morrow, that an ancestor of mine carried the banner of one of yours, in the thickest of the battle of Agincourt; it is astonishing into what insignificance the little struggles and little people of the world, almost instantly fell."

"But you seem never to have had any struggles, or at least with little people," observed De Vere.

"I ask your pardon," said Flowerdale, "and if I have not yet mentioned them" (here a smile at his own false shame came over him), "it is because the struggle I felt most was so truly and despicably ridiculous, that I was willing to escape the recital."

"I own you excite my curiosity," said De Vere, "yet at the same time I feel bound to repress it."

"Come," said Flowerdale, "you shall have the story, lest you should think it worse than it is—especially as there are no ladies present who might think it invented to satirize *them*."

"There is a lady then in the case," interrupted De Vere, with interest.

"More than one," replied Flowerdale, "one of whom was my wife"—

"And the other ?"

"A very foolish woman, who perhaps has by this time, disappeared from the stage—Lady Elizabeth Partridge."

"I know her," said De Vere, "she is alive and as foolish as ever. But how is it possible she could influence you ?"

"You shall hear. She was a cousin but once removed from Mrs. Flowerdale, on the strength of which, we were sometimes allowed the honour of being let in when we knocked at her door—before Christmas. Nay ! we were even permitted to talk to her in company, as her relations—but always, as I observed, before Christmas."

"And how could Christmas make a difference ?" asked De Vere.

"All the difference in the world; for then nobody but dry men of business, without their families, were in town. After Christmas, and as people of fashion got together, not only were we scarcely ever let in, but we were talked of by the lady, as a sort of distant connection of hers—she did not know how—but certainly connections !"

"Good !" said De Vere.

"In an evil hour, and *after* Christmas," continued Flowerdale, "some of my patrons, and indeed relations, thought but seemly, considering our family

blood, that Mrs. Flowerdale should be presented at court; and what does my single-hearted wife do, but, in very simplicity and ignorance of all the ways of silly people, apply as a thing of course, to her cousin, Lady Elizabeth, to present her."

"She did not surely refuse," cried De Vere.

"Not only refused," said Flowerdale, "but called, in a chair, on purpose to explain her reasons, and put her off from this very mad purpose, as she called it, for ever."

"Her reasons must have been curious," said De Vere.

"They were offensive," returned Flowerdale.

"Though our relationship, my dear Mrs. Flowerdale," said she, "cannot be denied, and I am sure I always acknowledge it; there is a great difference between meetings in a little family-circle like ours, (heaven knows we never were within it) and declaring our connection before all the high world. You surely know, or ought to know, the strong line of demarcation there is between persons of a certain defined rank, whose rights are every where acknowledged, and those of a doubtful class, neither one thing nor another, who are sometimes tolerated, one does not know how, but oftener refused the notice they pretend to; and it is to prevent your exposing yourself to what might sometimes make you very uncomfortable, that I have, my *dear Louisa*, taken all this trouble in explaining why I cannot comply with your request."

"This is admirable," cried De Vere; yet not concealing some indignation. "But I am impatient to know the result. I trust it was such as might be expected from a woman of sense and firmness."

"I am truly sorry," said Flowerdale, "that I cannot resolve you. For my wife, to make sure of being presented, had written, at the same time, to her friend and schoolfellow, the young Marchioness of Clanellan, then just married, and in all her glory."

"I can conceive a very different reception there," said De Vere.

"You are right," returned Flowerdale, "for she

drove instantly to our house with poor Louisa's note open in her hand; and before Lady Elizabeth had well finished her offensive explanations, with a thousand engaging expressions of kindness, agreed to all that her friend had requested. Lady Elizabeth bit her lips with vexation, and I am almost ashamed to say, the laugh of the two ladies at her folly was heard from the drawing-room before this half-bred woman of fashion could get into her chair in the lobby below."

"This is very fair poetical justice," observed De Vere; "but I am yet to learn how this could affect you in the least, much less be a struggle."

"I am ashamed to confess," returned Flowerdale, "how angry it made me at the time; and that, though I despised my lady cousin from the bottom of my heart, I felt a sort of triumph in beholding the admiration which my blooming and beautiful wife excited, under the auspicious introduction of the Marchioness, in circles which Lady Elizabeth herself was forced to approach with reverence. But this was all false, and unworthy true pride," continued he, "and I soon got the better when I arrived at this retirement, both of my contemptible resentment, and my perhaps still more contemptible revenge."

"I honour you for your self-accusations," said De Vere; "you certainly had no room for them here."

"No, indeed," answered Flowerdale; "for after being settled here a few weeks, with the life we pursued, the contemplation of Nature, and the primitive manners that surrounded us; above all, with the approximation to Him who is the Author of all, which arises out of a study of his works, and which towns and the ambition of towns cannot teach; you cannot conceive into what an immeasurable distance from us Lady Elizabeth and all such gentry were finally thrown."

"You speak volumes," said De Vere, "and the rather, because though you lived out of the world, you say you did not abandon it."

"By no means; for though I retired, it was only on account of this beautiful succession left me by my uncle. I had not lost my interest about my fellow-men.

I read of the struggle for superiority among my old acquaintances, even with eagerness, and not the less from feeling myself safe from their dangerous excitements. I was always fond of that engaging sentiment, which, did more men feel, there would be fewer dependant people in the world—'*Quis hoc non dederit nobis, ut cum opera nostra patria, sive non possit uti, sive nolit, ad eam vitam revertamur, quam multi docti homines (fortasse non recte, sed tamen multi,) republicæ præponendam putaverunt.*'"*

"This is, as you have called it," said De Vere, "an engaging sentiment, and I can perfectly well understand your feeling. But still my wonder is, that you could so school yourself, as to feel any interest at all about the world, if you felt no more."

"Your wonder is only natural, and your eagerness as it should be," replied Flowerdale, "for if all were like me, the world would not go on. But you will recollect, I was a man, if I may not say of learning, at least of letters; and the witchery of letters, as every one knows, depends upon leisure and happy quiet. There are those indeed, even among men of letters, who may not understand this, for there is a party spirit there too, more bitter and less generous, even than in politics: for which let Pope and Warburton answer, not I. For myself, I am convinced that some of the sweetest moments of my life, have been when, after an hour or two spent in reading, or serious thought, I have sallied from my study to breathe in some wild walk, and meditate (assisted by the exercise) on what had so employed and so improved me. At whatever time of my life, or wherever my tent, whether at school or at college; in the beautiful vallies of France, or in a mere cottage garden in England, the effect of this upon the heart has always been the same; the same happy calm has soothed, the same gratified feeling blessed me."

Mr. Flowerdale here finished; and the sentiments

* What is to prevent us, if our country either cannot or will not make use of our services, from returning to that (*private*) life, which many well-instructed men (perhaps not rightly, but still many) are of opinion ought to be preferred to the service of the state?

and the words with which he concluded, were so congenial to all De Vere's favourite notions, (revived lately in augmented strength,) that he continued some time in an attitude of deep attention, as if he thought his companion was still conversing; reminding himself in this, of that other discourse, (also after a friendly repast,) of which one of our greatest poets has made so beautiful a picture,

> "The angel ended, and in Adam's ear
> So charming left his voice, that he awhile
> Thought him still speaking."

There was a pause on both sides; when De Vere, finding his host had finally ceased, thanked him in the warmest terms for the satisfaction he had given him. "There is not a word you have uttered," said he, "but I shall remember, together with your hospitality, and the almost romantic manner of our meeting."

The great clock in the court yard, here struck one, and both gentlemen were astonished at the quick lapse of the hours.

"The clock strikes," said Mr. Flowerdale, "but I will not here add

> 'We take no *count* of time
> But by its loss.'

You have, however, made me unmercifully egotistical; and though the egotism has been, if I may so say, forced from me by yourself, I must have pity upon the exertions you have made, and let you retire."

At these words, lighting a taper, he conducted De Vere up an ancient staircase, so carved, embossed, and inlaid, that he could willingly have devoted another half hour to its examination, but that his host absolutely commanded a postponement of it till the morning. The two gentlemen then separated for the night, mutually charmed with a meeting which had given to Flowerdale the only thing he sometimes wanted—an intelligent companion.

De Vere reposed in an old cut velvet bed, in a room *wainscoted* with pannels, on many of which, were

carved the effigies of the Plantagenet monarchs, and some of the Bishops of Litchfield. He was, however, most struck with his dressing-room, which was in fact a retired closet of books, with a sopha and chairs of old turkey leather; and over the chimney were engraved the following lines, which derived greater interest from the recent conversation, still floating in his mind, and not a little from the appropriateness of the place.

"Ici je trouve le bonheur,
Ici je vis sans spectateur,
Dans le silence littéraire,
Loin de tout importun jaseur,
Loin des froids discours du vulgaire,
Et des hauts tons de la grandeur."

Revolving this, and all he had seen and heard, he sank to rest, pleased with the example of rational independence he had witnessed, and which he was not without a secret wish that he might one day imitate.

CHAPTER XXIX.

HOME.

Say, is your tardy master now at hand?
SHAKSPEARE.

This small inheritance my father left me,
Contenteth me, and's worth a monarchy.
SHAKSPEARE.

Long and deep were the meditations of De Vere on quitting Okeover Hall, and directing his course through the forest to Talbois, which now seemed more beloved than ever. The cheerful, unruffled content of Flowerdale; the sweets of his life; his independence of the world, and the sense of his conversation; all these dwelt on our traveller's mind. Though eager enough to get home, his reflections on all he had seen and heard so

absorbed him, that till within a mile of Talbois, he quickened not the pace with which he had set out, but allowed his horse to saunter with the reins almost at command, while he indulged in a variety of thought.

His meditation was intense and important; for the whole of human life, with all its hosts of images, rose up before him, and in an array, it must be owned, less pleasing than, from his age and station, might have been expected. But his disappointments, though chiefly arising from sensibility and high principle, rather than misfortune, had been many; and, as he passed the well known glades of Needwood, which led to his paternal house, he could not help contrasting his present feelings on revisiting them, with those which filled his careless bosom when he became first acquainted with their beauties; that happy time, big with expectation,

> "When oft before his infant eyes would run
> Such forms as glitter in the muse's ray."

"I have now seen these forms," said he to himself, "but I fear they glitter no longer."

For the rest of the way, till he was almost within sight of Talbois, he brooded over the conduct of his uncle, his own strange, yet unrepented separation from most of his friends, and, above all, from that lovely and superior being, before whom he had left the world bowing, so as for ever to deprive him of hope, had he ever encouraged any. Yet of this being he could not help thinking still with tenderness, though to him so unaccountably changed.

As he approached, however, nearer to Talbois, a gleam of satisfaction broke in upon him, which every one has more or less experienced on returning to his *home;* that magic word which has such a charm in it to all, that he must be lost indeed, to whom it does not bring some comfort. For there is not, in the whole range of moral observation, any thing so pregnant with satisfaction or interest, as the associations that cling to this simple word. Shelter, if not independence of all that may be without, together with the gratification of all *the* charities that are within, are the general notions

which here lay hold of us. These are not confined to any rank, or any nation, to any scale of enjoyment, or any degree of wealth. On the contrary, the more moderate the home, the greater the chance for those peaceful reflections, upon which the whole value of it depends. If ever the poor man *thinks* himself *a man;* if ever his mind is erect, or his manners softened, it is at home. It is there he feels himself God's creature equally with his master; it is there that he may laugh at the struggles of ambition, which, if even successful, can give no more than the power he has already of fancying himself supreme in his own little domain.

Hence it is not marble, nor gold, nor crowds of followers, that form any part of the value of this treasure, but the self-sufficing spirit which it calls up, and which, in a moral sense, equals us with monarchs.

That this is true, is proved by every man who has ever found pleasure in the silent hour, when he shuts out the world to converse with himself. Nor do I know a more enviable sensation than his, who, with his thoughts at peace, turns the key of his chamber upon the struggles of men, and while the lords of kingdoms quarrel with fortune for not giving them a wider rule, says to his own heart, within the precinct of perhaps a few square feet, "Here am I lord of myself."

Something of this sort touched the mind of De Vere, as he now came within view of his own estate, and recollected the many beings, and even inanimate objects which awaited his return. His heart expanded with delight when he thought of his revered parent, and the comfort which the sight of him, after so many anxieties, would give her. Her own pure life, her honourable character, her dignified suffering, and the consolations she had always derived from his filial attachment, took possession of his mind; yet not so exclusively as to prevent him from thinking of other associations belonging to a place which had been the seat of his high-souled ancestors. It was still the abode of unostentatious but determined principle; and in regard to himself, had been the scene of many a frolic, as well as of many a profitable hour.

The thought of all this, made him quicken his pace,

and discard his gloom for happier expectation; when, approaching the rough forest-gates, which divided his little kingdom from the great empire of Needwood, he was encountered by a dog, whom, by his growl and bushy tail, he immediately knew to be Triton. The animal, on recognising him, changed all his ferocity to gentleness, and leaped up with joy, in an attempt to lick his hand.

"Thou and thy master, old friend," said De Vere, "are too inseparable in body, as well as in character, for you to be alone. If thou art here, he cannot be far off."

In truth, Harclai appeared the next moment, and great and hearty were the mutual congratulations of two persons who loved and respected each other as cordially as any two men could do, of such different ages, manners, and views of things.

"You are welcome to your home," said Harclai, grasping his hand, "after a pilgrimage, which, I shrewdly suspect, has not been so untroubled as Herbert prophesied it would be."

"We will not talk of that now," replied De Vere; "tell me if my mother is well, for you come, I suppose, from the moated house."

"She expects you with eagerness," said Harclai, "and you will find her as well as you could wish. Would that all things else were so!"

"Your meaning?" answered De Vere.

"She is aware," replied Harclai, "of the irrespectable conduct of her brother, the falsehood of Clayton, and the extinction of your political hopes."

"And is this all?" said De Vere.

"If there were any *other* disappointments," observed Harclai, "she kept them to herself; but she is evidently uneasy. You are, however, a brave lad, and will not belie your birth.—You will not fail the expectations of this high-minded woman, to gain the proudest princess in Europe."

De Vere was embarrassed, and not over pleased; for he dreaded the allusion which this indicated, and he was therefore glad to be relieved by the sight of Lady Eleanor herself, standing at the great gates of *the moat*, and eager to receive him.

The embrace of the mother and son was gracious to both, and did Harclai good.

"If the world," said he, "often showed such a sight, I would not abuse it. However, I shall not lose my walk for all the mothers and sons in England. So adieu." At these words, and evidently by design, he left them to themselves.

For awhile, neither would say much: but it was obvious that much was expected by Lady Eleanor, who had long been informed of, and long brooded over the mental conflicts of her son. Yet the subject was too delicate to force, and, indeed, too unpleasant for either to enlarge upon. To blame her brother's conduct, both public and private, was the inclination of her mind; but her repugnance to touch upon it, kept her from saying much, even upon Clayton, in regard to whom she was glad to imitate her son in consigning him to silent contempt. But Constance;—the admired, the spotless, the natural Constance!—for her she was all ear, and listened to all that De Vere recounted of her, with a sympathy and intenseness of interest which only excited that of her son in a still greater degree. At the same time, she had little comfort from what he told her of the change in his cousin's manner towards him; and comparing it with the communications made to her by Lord Mowbray, she felt there was but one road for honour to take, and that road she was delighted to find De Vere had already pursued. Without any particularity of communication, therefore, between the mother and son, they mutually understood each other; and De Vere received her approbation of his design to accompany Mr. Wentworth abroad, as if he had acquainted her in form with all his feeling about his cousin, and she had agreed with him on the necessity for overcoming a hopeless passion. All this passed without a syllable on either part upon the nature or even the fact of his attachment. Such is the approximation of kindred minds.

On other parts of his situation he was far more precise, and in the course of the day, and when the servants had withdrawn after dinner, he was as communicative as Lady Eleanor or Harclai could have wished;

the latter of whom was any thing but a restraint upon either mother or son.

"I always thought Clayton a rogue," said his old guardian; "and for aught I can see, my Lord of Oldcastle is little better. You have, as I thought you would, been beset by knaves; and of the only two men who, from your accounts, promised well, one has sacrificed his power, the other his life, to a vile intrigue; while duplicity and suppleness have triumphed. But you are my own boy still," added Harclai, "and above them all, whatever the end of it."

De Vere begged him to control the exuberance of his philippic, assuring him that however disappointed, he was by no means yet prepared to follow him to the desert.

"My maxim," continued he, smiling, "is the converse of that one of Swift's, which you used to recommend; for he hated the animal called man, though he loved Tom or Peter; whereas, I love my species, though I may be outraged with particular individuals of it."

"This is exactly as I would have it," said Lady Eleanor.

Harclai replied, with a grin, and asked if he had gathered this doctrine from his treatment at the borough?

"Why, even there I found some fidelity, some virtue," replied De Vere; "and in regard to the treachery I experienced, I was more hurt and indignant with the snake that bit me after I had cherished him, than with the needy wretches who had never known me."

"You will, however, see the snake preferred, and bite others yet," said Harclai, "and will come to my creed at last; for

> 'When vice prevails, and impious men bear sway,
> The post of honour is a private station.'"

"Yes," said Lady Eleanor, "when impious men *do* bear sway. Mortimer, however, is, at any rate, too young for this; and much as I would have him with me, the comfort and stay of my declining years,

he will never forget that he has a country which has demands upon him as well as his mother."

De Vere thought this a good opportunity to open to her his *possible* scheme (he mentioned it merely as such) to join the confederates in Poland, after he had seen Mr. Wentworth sufficiently recovered. Harclai instantly demurred to it, saying there were rascals enough at home to oppose. But Lady Eleanor, though evidently surprised, after looking earnestly at her husband's picture, said, "that the cause was noble, and that her son should decide for himself."

"I believe," said Harclai, "you were born to be a Volumnia, instead of a kind and gentle mother, for Volumnia herself could not carry it better. In regard to our own citizens," added he, "I only hope our second Coriolanus will succeed better than the first; though, I fear, there is little difference between the citizens of Britain and of Rome, for both are confounded vagabonds. If you want proof, look to the good burghers of Wellsbury."

"I am not sorry for this over-vehemence," said De Vere, thoughtfully, "for it proves you wrong in proving too much. Did you manage your rage with the world better, and not tear it all to rags, I have recently parted with an example of rational retreat, such as would do more for your side of the question than all your virtuous inflammation."

Both Harclai and Lady Eleanor became instantly attentive, while De Vere recounted all his little adventures from Tutbury homewards; and contrasting Archer with Flowerdale, gave so engaging a picture of the latter that Harclai started upon his legs, and looking wistfully at his hat and cane, and whistling Triton who lay at the door, was ready to set off that instant in quest of a man, who, he said, was after his own heart.

"To him will I," added he;

"'Out of these convertites
There is much matter to be heard and learn'd.'"

"But he is no convertite," replied De Vere, "he has

no hasty view of the world; no disgust; nay, he has even a good opinion of it. Retirement is merely his taste, and in it he acts up to the dignity of his nature."

"I must know him," said Harclai, changing, "but not now; he is evidently a tame creature, who will keep cold. There is a difference between the retirement of indolence, and of indignant virtue."

Then musing a little, he added, "I suppose now, if I were to propose to him to make war upon the rogues in his neighbourhood of Wellsbury, in order to restore you to your rights, he would not help me, but prefer a walk by moonlight, or being toaded by Mr. John Gorblestone."

"I cannot suffer this," said De Vere.

"It is downright splenetic," observed Lady Eleanor. "I dare say, with so right-minded a man, seclusion cannot have had the effect of reducing him to mere negative virtue. If it has, what will become of your own?"

"The difference between us," answered Harclai, "is plain. Mr. Flowerdale has made himself a monk; while I, though seemingly out of the world, am perpetually in it. *I* know what is passing; *he* only what has passed. I the tricks of mankind, he the gambols of a kid. Would such a man, think you, venture on the hustings at a contested election?"

"Were there honourable cause for it, I have no doubt he would," replied De Vere; "but I know not why you ask."

"I am satisfied," said Harclai, and became suddenly and mysteriously silent.

Lady Eleanor retiring, the busy-minded humourist immediately resumed, by asking De Vere if he had revealed any part of his own history to his new acquaintance; and in particular, the machinations practised against him at the borough.

"Hardly," answered De Vere.

"And he descends from the old Okeovers?" said Harclai.

De Vere assented.

"Why then he shall soon see me," observed Harclai.

Accustomed as he was to sudden resolutions, as humour, or feeling (particularly if an indignant one) prompted on the part of his old friend, De Vere scarcely noticed this intimation, and Lady Eleanor shortly afterwards sending for them to coffee, the gentlemen left the eating-room to join her.

On the landing-place of the great stairs, however, hung an ancient map of this unfortunate borough of Wellsbury, which De Vere would have passed in a sort of disgust; but Harclai stopt him to point out the names of the different proprietors of the lands within it, and, among other divisions, a pretty considerable one entitled, "This is Mr. Okeover's land."

"And what then?" said De Vere. "Great part of that land is now mine, with the tenements upon it, and the rest has been recently sold to Lord Cleveland."

"That I did not know," replied Harclai, with a disappointed air, and his eyelids, as they always did, when he meditated any thing very seriously, twinkled in great agitation.

The evening passed off with Lady Eleanor in placid quietness, and in an enjoyment between mother and son, which neither of them had a long time known. The next day saw De Vere on his return to London; but not before he had stopped his horse at Lord Oxford's column, as it was called, before the gates of the moat, and contemplated with peculiar, perhaps with melancholy attention, the inscription we formerly commemorated.* In particular, the device of the decayed old oak, shooting out fresh branches, with the expressive motto of "*Insperata floruit*," filled him with reflections partaking of sadness. "The dreams," said he, "which this device has sometimes inspired, are idle, and ought not to be remembered; and he pushed on in silence to Litchfield.

* See vol. i.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE SCRUPLES OF A MAN OF THE WORLD.

Faith, some certain dregs of conscience are still within me.
SHAKSPEARE.

He has received a thousand ducats from Don John for accusing the Lady Hero wrongfully.
SHAKSPEARE.

MEANTIME the events which led to De Vere's absence, were almost forgotten in London. The death of Beaufort was no longer talked of, and the temporary secession and illness of Mr. Wentworth, though always a subject of inquiry, gave time to the ministry to breathe. It, in truth, made them feel comfortably easy.

As for De Vere, he seemed blotted out of all consideration, and almost out of memory; or if spoken of at all, it was as one who would never again appear upon the scene.

But this sort of interregnum, gave great scope for Mr. Clayton's powers to show themselves. Being the now known and admitted adviser of Mowbray, whatever consequence that nobleman possessed seemed entirely transferred to him; so that Lord Cleveland, and sometimes even Lord Oldcastle, betook themselves to *him*, whenever occasion required any service from his patron.

This was, in fact, the precise state for which Mr. Clayton was by nature fitted. Undistinguished by any inconvenient superiority of talent; of little mind, and of most obsequious docility; a worshipper of title, and a dexterous conveyor of messages; he was employed in matters of this nature to his heart's content. This made him more and more necessary, even among those who understood something of his character; (for few could penetrate the whole,) and it might be said, that many of them "could better spare a better man."

The consequence was, that Mr. Clayton became a person of real importance in the world. He was trusted, or thought to be so, and this occasioned a court to him which dazzled more eyes than those of his equals, over whom he now lorded it with a sway to which he expected every one to submit. In this, for the most part, he was obeyed; while those who resisted his sway were, either by open violence or secret machination, sure to be ruined.

Over Lord Mowbray, his empire was even despotic, though still craftily disguised under all proper appearances of outer respect. But it must be owned it pressed heavily on that unfortunate lord; for it was founded on the possession of secrets, which would have exposed him to shame had they been disclosed. Thus had this high-born and wealthy nobleman sunk under the most revolting and bitter of all slaveries, that of feeling himself in the power of his dependant; and while the ascendency of Mr. Clayton was admired by all, by some it was attributed to the force of his abilities alone.

Lord Cleveland was the only person not in any point deceived. From his own attempts upon the borough, added to his natural sagacity, he had found easy means to penetrate the whole intrigue of Clayton and his patron; and in truth he used it with adroitness to establish a despotism over Clayton himself, fully equal to that which the latter held over Lord Mowbray. In a word, he gave him to understand the full extent of his information, and bound him with it as with a chain of iron.

"Thus did the course of justice wheel about;"

and while Lord Mowbray was all pomp and importance to an extensive and obsequious set of the uninitiated, and Mr. Clayton was considered as the most rising and prosperous young man in the state, the consequence of the one, and the smiles and open exterior of the other, were but ill supported within, by a perpetual fear that gnawed their very hearts.

Such, in too many instances, is the world. We

confine it not to the great and powerful, or to men of public life, though of such are we now treating. In all ranks and professions is to be found the secret wretch (well may we call him so), who depends upon another for his fame or safety, from feeling that he has within

"Crimes unwhipt of justice."

In short, the whole history of mankind shows that he only is truly enviable who is truly innocent; and not to turn pale at the thought of secret misconduct, is really, what it has been called, the brazen wall that protects the mind. He who has it, let him never part from it; whether under thatch or canopy, it will ever be his richest and happiest possession.

We have ventured upon this digression, because it was in consequence of the discoveries made by Lord Cleveland of the intrigues at Wellsbury, that he was enabled to put his seal both upon Clayton and his patron, and stamp them as his own; and it must be acknowledged, considering all things, that his exactions were not heavy. They were, only, that Lord Mowbray should become his devoted follower in politics, under whatever changes might happen, and that Clayton should aid him in keeping De Vere aloof from his cousin, and weakening as much as possible their esteem for one another.

To complete De Vere's ruin with his uncle, followed of course, and, indeed, was no difficult service; as Lord Mowbray was already sufficiently estranged from him, upon the known principle, that the weak and selfish are always given to hate those whom they have injured. This principle, indeed, Mr. Clayton at first did not seem to acknowledge. Nay, in a fit of that sensibility which sometimes came over him, he protested his horror at any thing that might appear like treachery against his *early friend*, whom, he said, he still continued to love, spite of ill-usage. But at the mention of ill-usage, Lord Cleveland fairly burst into laughter, and asked him, with a most sardonic leer, whether his conduct to De Vere at Wellsbury had not greatly affected his sensibility?

"In short, my good and virtuous secretary," said Lord Cleveland, "fall not into the ridicule of sentiment with one who knows you and the world as I do. Your object is power and fortune, by the quickest mode you can attain them; mine, in addition to power, is love. You know what I believe, and what you yourself have told me, is the obstacle to my success. That obstacle it is even our *duty* to remove: nor do I ask any thing which has not, in fact, good for its end. Such I hold it to be to keep the divine Constance from falling into the hands of a beggar."

He added, that gratitude to Lord Mowbray ought alone to excite him to this service, as De Vere not only did not contradict, but had himself confirmed a report that he was the favoured suitor of his cousin, and the destined heir of his uncle.

"I am, indeed, glad to find," concluded Lord Cleveland, "that the lady herself only appreciated her own value, in having actually laughed at the supposition that such a person could pretend to her. This she has done so contemptuously, that I have thought it but right to cause it to be reported to your *quondam patron*, whose gunpowder spirit will, no doubt, flash at it. But impertinence ought not the less to be made known to the heiress of Mowbray."

Clayton, who had now long turned his back on the ladder by which he had ascended, felt his own spirit flash at the sort of sneer with which his lordship had alluded to De Vere as his patron, and still more at the close and critical observation of his countenance, by which, in the manner of a superior genius, the allusion was accompanied. But Clayton, however unwillingly, also felt he was in the toils of a master-spirit; and he replied, with an air of conviction, that if all this were so, his scruples, which otherwise would be insurmountable to a man of honour, were, in a great measure, removed.

Lord Cleveland again laughed at the word scruples; which only made his slave feel more angry, more humbled, and more helpless. He was also tortured by the bitter mortification which the wicked cannot always escape, when they have pride mingled with their

wickedness, and when they know that they are seen through, made use of, and despised, by a wickedness more fearless and towering than their own.

In the end, it was agreed between these excellent persons, that Clayton should inform Lord Mowbray, not only that the world still talked, but that De Vere himself was the authority for the degrading rumour. This being settled, Lord Cleveland declared that, with so much discretion and talent for business as Clayton had shown, he would never rest till he saw him at the head of some important department, perhaps even in the Privy Council itself; a declaration so agreeable to Mr. Clayton, that it even did away the sting of the ever-during sneer with which it was made.

We will not stop to inquire how much of the accusation brought against De Vere, or of the contempt towards her cousin, imputed to Lady Constance, was *believed* by Mr. Clayton. It is certain he had still conscience enough left to feel, or think he felt uneasy (such were his sensibilities) that he was in that ignoble situation, once so emphatically deplored by a rogue with too much conscience, when he exclaimed, "What a miserable thing it is to be but half a rascal!" Reflecting, however, upon the consequence in society of his noble ally, he assured himself it was impossible that he could accuse De Vere falsely; and it ended in his resolving to convey the fact to Lord Mowbray, if not to his daughter, as soon as possible. Such help does the devil often find in the sophistries of selfishness.

On the other hand, a report was soon conveyed to De Vere, that Lady Constance, on being informed by her father that he had presumed to pretend to her, had treated it with slight, and spoken of himself with a condescending pity. 'Twas a report he could not believe; but, with all his sagacity, he was not yet old enough in the world to treat it with contempt. The scantiness of his fortune made the thing possible in the belief of the world, and, with any other than the modest and generous Constance, probable. At any rate, she had avoided him; and the very existence of the report, though proceeding from others, alarmed

his pride. He was more than ever anxious to see his cousin, and he became peculiarly restless, irritable, and uneasy.

But the alarm of Lord Mowbray was infinitely greater at the supposed presumption of De Vere; and he was only consoled by the suggestion of his secretary, that were Lady Constance made acquainted with it, it would so hurt her delicacy, that it would go farthest of any thing in the world, to keep her still more aloof from her cousin, and render her more open to the attentions of those who could fairly aspire to her.

Lord Mowbray relished this so much, that he not only resolved upon it, but also upon extending the information to Lady Eleanor. "It will cure that foolish person," said he, "of her ridiculous opinions of her son's superiority."

Here, however, Clayton interposed, and ventured humbly to point out the inconvenience of such a procedure.

"It will produce no conviction," he observed, "on such a devoted mother, who will of course communicate it to her son; and your lordship's time, which ought to be given to the state, will be absorbed in fending and proving in private quarrels, which of course will end in no satisfaction."

"You say true," said Lord Mowbray, "it is better as it is."

In the same deference to his secretary, his lordship also complied with his request, not to mention his name to Lady Constance.

"As there seems," said Clayton, "little doubt about the fact, your lordship's authority ought to suffice; and, for myself, I know not why, but I have the misfortune to find myself so little agreeable to Lady Constance, and Mr. De Vere is evidently so much in her esteem, that it might produce a most serious explosion, in which Lord Cleveland would be compromised, and the whole end frustrated."

Lord Mowbray assented to these reasons; and felicitated himself on having a secretary, who he said had prudence enough for the cabinet itself.

The communication was soon made; but strange to say, and to Lord Mowbray's indignation, it was utterly disbelieved by the generous party concerned.

That Mortimer, the most delicate observer of all that was due to woman and woman's fame; that Mortimer, who seemed born to revive the chivalrous generosity of the days of yore; that Mortimer, in short, who, in regard to himself, had latterly seemed to watch her only in distance and silence, should thus undermine her fame and give a stab to her delicacy—all this appeared so incredible, that though at first the imputation seemed to swell her heart to bursting, she almost at once recovered, and, with calm dignity, declared the thing was impossible.

"Impossible!" cried Lord Mowbray.

"Yes, my dearest father, some demon has deceived you."

"Deceived *me*, Lady Constance! and yet I am not usually deceived—I do not commonly speak without authority; and it ought to be sufficient, I think, to say I believe it."

Constance was affected. Not that she believed it the more for this credulity of her father; but she was grieved, and secretly wondered at the world, when such a man as De Vere could not escape such malicious fabrications. With much duty, therefore, but with much firmness, she asked Lord Mowbray his authority.

"There," said he, "you must excuse me." Then assuming that air of dignity which belongs to persons who think themselves in the right, he added, "with what view, my dear lady Constance, would you wish me to give this authority?"

"Of course, that you might communicate it to Mr. De Vere."

"Of course, too, you have considered the consequences—the inevitable rupture it would occasion; the —the—danger, perhaps blood of one, or of both of the parties—the exposure of your name—the—the—"

"Oh, my father!" exclaimed Constance, greatly alarmed, especially with these last suggestions, "you need say no more. I retract my question. I see its

imprudence, and am content, without inquiry, to be satisfied in my unbelief."

"You see, then," replied Lord Mowbray, half pleased, half affronted, "an old head *may* sometimes be better than a young one; and you will give me leave to repeat my own belief of what I have told you, and govern yourself accordingly towards your cousin. By the way, I am glad to hear he is going abroad, even though, with his usual perverseness, in the cause of rebellion."

Constance, doomed to be more and more astonished, asked the meaning of this last intimation, and learned, with surprise, yet mixed with something like admiration, the disposition (it was no more) which Mortimer had evinced to visit Poland under its then unequal struggle with Russia.

"It will complete his ruin," said Lord Mowbray; "but with that we have now nothing to do. I am satisfied myself with having thus performed my duty to him as an uncle, and to you as a parent; leaving your own sense of what is due to me and to yourself, to decide how to act."

Will any one comprehend the blindness of selfishness, when we say, that in this Lord Mowbray actually believed what he thus said of himself; and, coldly kissing his daughter, and bowing somewhat stiffly, yet with sufficient complacency at the thought of having secured her deference to his advice, he left her.

CHAPTER XXXI.

MISUNDERSTANDING.

Let your fair eyes and gentle wishes go with me to my trial, wherein if I be foiled, there is but one shamed that was never gracious; if killed, but one dead who is willing to be so. I shall do my friends no wrong, for I have none to lament me.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE interview with her father, described in the last chapter, was the most serious of Lady Constance's life. That life had, till now, been placid and equal; and though lately hurried with dissipation, and ruffled sometimes by circumstances, it was the mere transitory uneasiness which modesty and goodness always feel, when made the object of the public gaze. She had been forced, indeed, to decide upon overtures from others, in a manner unpalatable to their feelings; and this, too, had hurt her own for the time. But, the crisis over, no lasting discomfort remained; and the return to cheerfulness was only the natural effect which will always belong to youth and spirits, when accompanied by innocence.

It was but lately that Constance had ever felt clouded, except from external circumstances. Her disappointment at finding that perpetual gaiety was by no means perpetual happiness, had generated some seriousness; and the talk of the world, as described to her, had made her shrink from the notice of her cousin, like a sensitive plant. Till this moment, however, her energies had never been much called upon, and she now continued wrapped in sad reflection for many minutes after her father had left her. Strange that this seeming princess of the world should be thus exposed to care, amidst halls and bowers, from which, to the common observer, "sorrow flies far."

Under circumstances so new, and, as it might be feared, so afflicting, it was the generosity of her mind that in the end supported her. The noble nature of Mortimer found too close a pattern in hers, to be seriously injured by an accusation which she unhesitatingly pronounced to be groundless. And the consequence was, but a just one to herself; for she rose from her reverie, relieved and satisfied, under a communication which it was supposed was to overwhelm De Vere with disgrace, and herself with grief.

But though this had completely failed, there is so painful a sensation in delicate minds when they find themselves exposed to the general, perhaps the coarse, comments of the world, that Constance was far from happy. She heard of her cousin's intended expedition, with an interest which was mixed.

"He is no longer to me the same Mortimer that he was," said she to herself; "nor am I the same friend to him. My father wills it, and I must obey my father. Pity he *is* so changed towards Mortimer, but he will no longer look grave upon *me*, when the world no longer talks. Yes, yes; it is right that my cousin should go."

Though this reflection was made with a sigh, the decision of it relieved her from some of the gloom that had come over her mind. The kiss, too, cold and formal as it was, with which her father had taken his leave, awakened in her sensations of filial pleasure, seldom indeed excited, but never raised without holding out to her heart the purest hope of its happiness. This, in her high innate sense of duty, formed, in fact, an anchoring place for her mind; and this will account, too, for much of that decision of conduct which she presently displayed; and explain a demeanour which, to some readers, may prove unexpected.

That Mortimer was superior to all the young men she had ever seen, her judgment had often confessed. His loftiness, his rectitude, his contempt of every thing that had a shade of that accommodating spirit, which self-interest prescribed to every one around her, and the contrary of which, the universal corruption of the time had made it a fashion to ridicule; all this stamped

him in her mind as a person of a higher order, whose caste was by no means diminished by the mediocrity of his fortune. In short, though lowered in all his prospects, she still thought him the honour of her house. But, in thinking so, she had made no surrender of affections, which, as it appeared to her, had never even been sought. So far from this, she even regretted that her cousin was not her brother; a Mowbray instead of a De Vere. Hence, then, she was more open to the effects of a conviction that to think of him in any other light than as a relation, would for ever forfeit her father's countenance; and hence, too, the persuasion which, though not universal among the young women of the time, was with her most peculiarly strong, that even though a father might be in fault, the character of a daughter would for ever want support, by acting in opposition to him.

"Ah!" said she, "let me never be put on my defence where my father is a party. It suits neither with my age nor sex; nor would the countenance of the whole world heal the wound I should inflict upon myself in wounding him."

Her merit in this was the greater, because, though the bias of her nature was to love her parent, even with fondness, if he would permit it, she felt too fatally that he did not give the permission; and thus, a mind that was rich in endowments, and a heart formed to be the abode of all the affections, were left wandering and void, deprived of their best interest, and almost a blank in the scale of existence.

Still her highest pleasure had always been in the pride which she saw her father took in her. That pride, indeed, rather than paternal fondness (so sweet to the child where it exists), was the chief, if not the only sign of pleasure which Lord Mowbray ever showed in her. But even this was a comfort with which no inclination she had hitherto felt could stand in competition; and the very notion that she was thought capable of fostering an affection unsought, and unsanctioned by her parent, affected her in a manner to give her the greatest uneasiness. With all her interest, therefore, about De Vere, she was by no means in his

power; and it was, upon the whole, a relief to these feelings at least, to hear of his intended departure.

But though devotion to filial duty and to delicacy might be said to form the most essential part of Constance's character, and whenever it came in competition with other feelings, she had neither choice nor hesitation as to decision; yet she felt not the ease which she wished at the prospect of a separation, indefinite both as to time and place, and pregnant, perhaps, with personal danger. It was not, therefore, altogether without perturbation that she soon after heard a message delivered from De Vere to his uncle, requesting to take leave of him and his cousin before he set out.

This made it necessary to call up all her firmness, and she did it so successfully that, though the softness of her demeanour was resumed, De Vere (for so we are obliged to own) was even mortified at the manner in which she allowed him to take leave of her.

There was, indeed, sweetness in it, because sweetness was so interwoven in her nature that it could not fail her. But it was not that sweetness which (according to the beautiful thought) seemed, in bidding him adieu, to bid him return. It was too kind to make him accuse her of caprice, but far too self-possessed for him to discover a feeling beyond what relationship warranted.

In truth, whatever we may think or have heard of the power of early bias and secret affection, the predominating rectitude and determination of her character were, in reality, equal to the conquest of even this strong inclination, when called upon to attempt it, as she felt she was, by duty to her father, and respect for herself. It was this, then, that had enabled her lately to be near her cousin, and now to part from him in the manner we have described.

With respect to De Vere, the mine laid by Lord Cleveland, as we before related, had been actually sprung; and however completely he rejected, as incompatible with her lovely character, the malignant report of her supposed contempt, the fact that such contempt of his pretensions, should he entertain them, was felt by his uncle, filled him with uneasiness mixed with re-

sentment. Nor do we disguise that no little anxiety in respect to Constance herself was the offspring of these uncertainties; or that his pulse beat quick on entering the drawing-room, at finding that Lord Mowbray was absent, and that for the first time for many weeks he was alone with his cousin.

Her late distance towards him, unexplained as it was, had sent him to the interview in that doubtful mood, which might or might not be appeased—might be all turned to tenderness, or be chilled to coldness, according to the circumstances that arose.

In the commencement he watched her with anxiety, to detect, if he could, any thing like an emotion similar to his own; but in vain.

"I go," said he at last, in answer to her question upon the length and object of his absence, "too little charmed with what the world has lately exhibited, to be very anxious about my return. I go with the man I most, if not the only man I greatly, admire: nor have I much object beyond being of use to him in his melancholy: except to forget, if I can, myself and all that has befallen me during the last eight months."

"Forget yourself, Mortimer! forget your friends?" said Constance, with kindness, but of a sort so collected and natural, that De Vere wished it had been less.

"I seem to have no friends," replied he, "except her I have left at Talbois, and him I accompany."

"Indeed!" exclaimed Constance, somewhat shaken. "And is this house no longer your uncle's? And are we relations only in blood? I thought it had been otherwise."

"Heaven knows I thought so too," replied De Vere; scrutinizing her face and manner with an air of composure, which the thought of the change in his uncle, enabled him to assume. "But where the highest interests of the state, are frustrated and lost from changes of opinion, it little boots us to hope that private connections should remain without estrangement."

"Mortimer," said Constance, with a look of dignity and softness mixed, "you are not kind to us, or to

yourself, in this. God knows I have deplored many things as well as you; but there has been no estrangement."

And here, spite of her resolution, her beautiful lip would have betrayed that it quivered, had she not turned to the open balcony to conceal it. Recovering, and aided, perhaps, by a feeling that to her at least Mortimer was not perfectly just, she continued, "You have been ill used, my cousin; but we will not let you part with us in ill humour."

"I have no ill humour," said De Vere, somewhat loftily, "nor," (and he here felt still more erect) "have I a complaint to make. From some, indeed, I have received injury, in return for benefits——"

"That, you too certainly have," interrupted Constance, but checked herself again, while she thought of her father.

"With others," continued he, "I have been deemed of no consequence, when found without power, after being flattered with notice, under a different impression."

"Those who have acted thus, are beneath you, my cousin," exclaimed Constance.

"In many things, I trust they are," replied De Vere; "and if there are others still, of a better order, who think I am in the way,—" and he stopped.

"Think you in the way!" cried Constance; "to whom can you allude?"

"To those, dear Constance, too near me in connection, for me to wish to go on. I mean merely to observe, that even here, I have too humble an opinion of myself, to complain of changes, which may, for aught I know, be only deserved, by the presumption I have shown, in setting up my own judgment against their's. To such however, it can be of little consequence whither I go, or when I return—and if I never do return——"

"Dear Mortimer," exclaimed Constance, here thrown off her guard, and alive to all her father had told her, "what mean these dark hints? I have heard reports that you mean to espouse, nay, risk your life, in the cause of persons who, my father says, are rebels,

and I intreat you to tell me what you mean by never returning?"

"Merely," replied De Vere, "as was once said by another, that 'if I be foiled in my enterprise, there will be one shamed, that never was gracious,' and in the world, I fill up 'a place, which may be better supplied, when I have made it empty.' As for those whom Lord Mowbray calls rebels, his lordship and I may differ."

"True, Mortimer," cried Constance, "and whatever you determine, I am sure it will be all in honour." She then added, with resumed firmness, accompanied by a forced smile, "I have often, you know, scolded you for false opinions both of yourself, and others. The supposition that you are abandoned, is a proof of it, and sits as ill upon you, as it would upon *me*, whom I know you think surrounded by *friends*."

"You! Constance! You abandoned! The queen of life, or all that in life is worth following! You! the ornament of the court, and the focus of elegant gaiety!"

Lady Constance shook her head, and in truth felt heavy at heart, at observing that the general opinion, which she felt to be of so little consequence to her real well being had extended itself to De Vere. She was, therefore, only relieved by the entrance of her father.

Lord Mowbray, though he had fixed the hour of meeting, for which he was himself too late, was not overpleased at finding De Vere alone with his daughter; and his look of mistrust, only excited still more the revolting spirit of his nephew.

He was so evidently contemptuous, as well as displeased, that for the moment De Vere both felt and looked as if he abandoned all his tenderness, as well as all his hope, about his cousin; and, with an erect front, stood before them both, seemingly in proud independence. Lord Mowbray never liked him under this appearance; and to Constance, it seemed so undeserved, as well as so new, that each of these cousins, formerly such magnets to one another, now really wished the interview to be over. So easy is the progress of misun-

derstanding sometimes with the best, so prone is poor human nature to multiply its own mortifications.

It must however, be said for Lord Mowbray, that in addition to his fears, of De Vere, he had fears of another kind, which had been cruelly excited in consequence of a discovery of a supposed intrigue that menaced his power. In these moments, he was too little kind to any body to be very benignant towards a man whom he never had loved, and always feared, even before he had injured him. He seemed therefore peculiarly distant and formal, though the ruling subject of his thoughts could not help showing itself.

"Young men," said he, "are right to travel; but I could have wished you had chosen another companion. The friendship of Mr. Wentworth is dangerous, and will weigh down any one who has his fortune to make; as you have found, to your cost."

"And yet," said De Vere (eager for his friend, though full of very different thoughts,) "no man has such an increasing influence among those whom you suppose, my dear uncle, to be solely intent upon this fortune-making design."

"Increasing!" exclaimed Lord Mowbray, biting his lip; "and does he really expect success?"

"In his great object," replied De Vere, "although perhaps not in the acquisition of place."

"What other object can he have?" said Lord Mowbray, with something like contempt.

"To effect, whether in or out of place," observed De Vere, "a reform in the rules of action which seem to govern all ranks; to make power more powerful, by establishing it on public opinion; and to give a better bias to public opinion, itself: in a word to make the king what he wishes and what he is formed to be, the man of his people."

"Excellent schoolboy visions," returned Lord Mowbray, in a tone of sneer, alarm, and anger mixed. "Such theories attempted to be put in practice, will ruin the state."

"They may ruin particular statesmen," said De Vere, "but they will regenerate public virtue, of which the state stands so much in need; and we may then see

what the country so much desires, an administration governing *for* the country, not for themselves."

He said this (excited by the subject, spite of other thoughts) with so much animation, that Constance however averse to these conversations could not help admiring him. But both her admiration, and his excitement, were quickly lost in the sour looks and language of Lord Mowbray.

"Nephew," said the latter, "you do ill in letting such sentiments escape you. They almost amount to sedition; and, considering who I am, they seem meant as a personal affront.

"My dear uncle, nothing was farther from my thoughts."

"Perhaps so," replied Lord Mowbray; "and I am unwilling to remind you, considering all that has been done for you, that to *me*, such conduct is at least not grateful."

"Done for me!" thought De Vere, repressing the exclamation, when he saw that Constance was affected by this speech of her father. Lord Mowbray however was evidently angry, as well as uneasy, and looking towards the door, showed plainly that he thought the sooner this audience of leave was finished, the better. De Vere observed it, and tried to find comfort where he had so often met with it—in Constance. But she seemed, from whatever cause, as uneasy as her father. Her eyes were averted and downcast; and an awkward constraint, for the first time in her life, sat upon the brow of the most open and beautiful countenance in the world.

Except therefore by a slight pressure from her hand, when De Vere finally took his leave, it required far more vanity than his, to believe that he was much above the commonest of her acquaintance. The thought banished his pride, and made his courage sink, as, with a hurried step and beating heart he left the room. Nor as he passed through the hall, did he notice the respectful salutations of a train of bowing domestics, whom, somehow or another, he had inspired with more than the esteem that is usually felt for a master's friend, by the common herd of London footmen. The

porter, in particular, who had known him from a boy, wished him health and success, with an emphasis evidently sincere. To this, so much was he absorbed, he could scarcely reply, but hastened through the square, without looking behind him; and it was some minutes before he recollected this part at least of the farewell he had received. He then felt it, from contrasting it with another, and was so alive to it, that, taxing himself with haughtiness, and indifference for what was meant so well, he could have returned to show his sense of it, had he known exactly in what manner to disclose his feeling.

"These good fellows," said he "are capable of attachment, and give me what others, from whom I expected differently, deny me. It is plain that my departure is a relief to my uncle, if not to Lady Constance herself!"

The thought called the blood to his cheek, and much of his pride returned. He accused his cousin of caprice, of coldness, of injustice; and had he been other than exactly what he was, he might, for a few seconds, have endeavoured to lash himself into an opinion that he had given her a consequence of which she was unworthy. But De Vere was too worthy himself, and too little like Lord Cleveland in this respect, for such a temper to continue. His resentment (if it had so decided a character) melted away before he got the length of the street which led to his lodgings; and before he got home, he had restored his mind to thoughts more worthy both of himself and of her to whom they pointed.

"No!" said he; "let me not take refuge in the equivocal consolation that she is in fault. It is plain I have no interest in her heart. But that does not diminish her excellence." Then he added, with a sigh, "She never gave me encouragement. I have no complaint to make."

This acquittal acted two ways. It indeed forced him to confess that his affection was hopeless. But he had rejected all mean and unjust accusations, which might for a moment have supported him. He had decided

honourably by his cousin, and in doing so, he felt as a man of honour will always feel.

And thus, we grieve to say, parted two persons who valued each other, perhaps, even at the moment, more than aught else in the world; and thus it is, that minds the most congenial, and seemingly formed to coalesce in the sweetest union, may, sometimes, by missing the precise moment of explanation, after a slight misunderstanding, separate for ever. Let us learn a lesson from it which may be useful to the proudest heart, and the most delicate sensibility,—that there is no pride so high, nor delicacy so refined, as to be above the aid of mutual concession. How many blossoms of happiness have been shaken from the tree, and died prematurely, and how much sourness has been engrafted in their places, merely for the want of such timely sacrifice.

Yet, alas! who, and what are we,—worms as we are in the eye of Omnipotence,—that we should thus sport with the good he destined for us? If every proud spirit which labours under mistake, would, in its most swelling and "palmy state," thus whisper to itself, what evils might be spared in the history of man!

CHAPTER XXXII.

A COURTIER'S FEARS.

Though I am daughter to his blood, I am not to his manners.
SHAKSPEARE.

Why, he stalks up and down like a peacock, a stride and a stand: ruminates like an hostess that hath no arithmetick but her brain, to set down her reckoning; bites his lip with a politick regard, as who should say, there were wit in his head, if 'twould out.
SHAKSPEARE.

In the last chapter we described the parting between *Constance* and her cousin as a proud one. But, De

Vere gone, Lady Constance felt the manner in which both she and her father had suffered him to leave them. The necessity she thought there was to conceal even the subdued regard she had for him, had been strengthened, so as to give her additional courage, by the seeming loftiness of his manner,—which, from her father's entrance, had evidently, though after a struggle, got the better of his tenderness. This kept her in a kind of neutral position; and the violence of Lord Mowbray, had afterwards so confused her, that in the actual moment of parting, she seemed almost in a state of indifference.

But her's, after all, was a young heart. Nothing could break in upon her sense of right; but she was not one of those heroines who are so absorbed by high principle, as to be able to assert it without effort, and almost without emotion. She felt, therefore, as the gentle being she was would necessarily feel; and as her cousin's footsteps died away upon the stairs, and she thought of the untoward difference between Lord Mowbray and him, in this their parting moment, she underwent a revulsion, a sort of remorse of spirit, which much affected her. "It was right," thought she, "not to encourage the suspicion that De Vere was a lover; but it was *not* right to let him depart as if he were not a cousin."

Luckily for her agitation, Lord Mowbray, the very moment that De Vere left the room, had returned to the perusal of a letter from Kew, with which he had entered, open in hand, and which, in causing him the most serious alarms, had occasioned much of the splenetic humour he had displayed towards his nephew. Absorbed in this, it gave time for Lady Constance to recover, and, indeed, it proved a considerable diversion to her attention: for the anxious statesman was in no inconsiderable agitation himself.

With a heart softened by the recent occurrence, and in want of all the support a parent could afford—desirous, too, of giving herself the only consolation which could compensate the exertion she had made in that interchange of sympathy which makes some fath-

ers and their children all in all to one another—how was she disappointed and grieved to find that, whatever was the cause of Lord Mowbray's anguish (for it was no less), it was not from her attempted soothing that he could derive any comfort. Yet, spite of her own uneasiness, she dressed her soft and beautiful countenance in its most endearing smile. She played with his hand, and with her cheek close to his, asked, modestly, but tenderly, if she might not be permitted to know the cause of his trouble.

It was in vain; Lord Mowbray remained fixed in thought, with a knit brow, and a countenance of iron; and, observing that ladies could know nothing of the cares that weighed down statesmen, desired that Mr. Clayton might be sent for.

"My dear father," said Constance, "you are evidently affected by some untoward business, if you are not really ill; and may I not be permitted at least to share what affects you, though I cannot cure it?"

Lord Mowbray, however, continued in silent thought, and unrelaxed features, for some time; when, regardless of her innocent caresses, he replied—

"I have often told you, Lady Constance, that politics are above your comprehension. Indeed," said he, rising, and striding across the room, "they are above the comprehension of any one, even of those who are admitted into the secrets of courts and cabinets. Storms often arise where least expected; and little wise are those who think office has nothing but sweets, or that office men are always on beds of roses."

Constance would have retired, as despairing of power to console him, though wondering, and fearful of some new and dangerous crisis. But the agitated earl motioned her to remain.

"Stay," said he, continuing to walk the room, and contemplating his red ribbon with no seeming pleasure. "Since Clayton is not in the way, I may as well disburthen myself of what presses upon me; though you can give no advice in a matter you cannot possibly understand. At the same time it will show you what some men are."

Rough as it was, Constance felt something like pleasure at this promise of confidence where she so much wished it, and she listened respectfully for what was to follow. In truth, the good lord was too big with his vexation not to hope for some relief by disclosing it, even though it was to a woman, and the secret a political one. But what was the astonishment of Constance to find that the apprehended danger, and all this moralizing upon the uncertainties of place and power, arose out of the conduct of an old statesman, who in every body's opinion had been for ever laid upon the shelf. As he was known to Lady Constance, who, in common with the rest of the world, admired his wit and vivacity, but supposed that age and wrinkles, though they had not extinguished his spirits, must have long dispelled all worldly ambition, she ventured to console her father on this equivocal ground. With one foot in the grave, it could not enter the fancy of the blooming Constance, that such a man could be a subject for ambition to sport with. She knew not that ambition never grows old.

Lord Mowbray smiled superiority at this simplicity of his daughter; but observed, not without trepidation, "Alas! you know not the arts of a hoary politician, when self is in question."

Lord Mowbray in this, stopped not to consider how blind self may be when it ventures to moralize; nor did the filial minded Constance detect it in her father.

But Lord Mowbray went on, and with many hesitations, looking with anxiety during intervals at the letter, which he still grasped, he exclaimed, "Yes! yes! he has fire enough left, and cunning enough too, to endanger us, and so Lord Oldcastle thinks. Yet, with his fortune, and high enough in rank, what can there possibly be in mere office that, at such an age, can tempt him thus to sacrifice himself?"

Now, as Lord Mowbray was little more than sixty when he said this, and his dangerous rival near fourscore, we are not to suppose that he could be conscious of any inconsistency in saying it. In truth, his warmth and manner indicated nothing but sincerity even with himself; nor, as we have before observed, was his pupil disposed to seek for any thing else, when

it was her father that spoke. But judge of her surprise when he acquainted her with the peculiar ground of his fears, which was, that this time-furrowed rival, sought and was admitted, ("no doubt," said Lord Mowbray, "for the low purpose of acquiring favour,") into all the private parties at court; nay, into the very games of the royal children; "and you will be astonished when I tell you of a play for them which he himself has invented."

Constance looking curiosity, her father proceeded to inform her, that the eldest of the young princes condescended to shoot him with paper arrows, till he dropped down seemingly dead, when the joy was for the little prince to kiss him to life again. "This, and hot cockles and forfeits," said Lord Mowbray, shaking his head, "would, under such a man, endanger a stronger administration than ours: nor should I be surprised if Wentworth, and perhaps even your cousin, flown as they are, were at the bottom of it."

Constance thought within herself, how little her father could know his nephew, when he attributed such designs to him; and her respect for the open character of Wentworth equally exempted him from the imputation. In fact, the death of Beaufort, and the effect this had produced on many characters whom, from what she knew of them, she honoured in the world, had given a shock to her mind, from which she had not recovered; and the present conversation exhibiting (as even her filial reverence could not prevent her from imagining) the most childish fears, was any thing but agreeable to her feelings or her principles. Ambition, indeed, as she had seen it conducted, had already had too sinister an effect upon private happiness, to make her quite so favourable to it as, in her natural sentiments, considering it as a noble passion, she had originally been. We have not denied that she had been somewhat dazzled at the influence which, as a young and elegant female, she was told she might acquire among those who conducted the state; and, for a moment, her love of all virtue, public as well as private, gave her an elevation, to the pleasure of which she yielded. But her modesty first (always the surest *index* to inform a woman whether she is right or

wrong,) and afterwards her judgment, nay, her very pride itself, combined to make her tremble on the threshold, at entering on such a career. There was nothing she thought so little a woman's province as party; and she looked with little reverence on the busy exertion of a young and beautiful peeress, who with the highest attraction, and all the seeming qualities of a good wife and mother, as De Vere once observed, unsexed herself by becoming the focus of political rage and intrigue. In her feelings upon this point, she had been confirmed by her prudent friend, Lady Clanellan; and she had for some time, on this, as well as almost every other account, wished for the summer to close upon a way of life for which the more she saw of it, she felt less and less fitted. For all these reasons, therefore, though anxious to sooth her father's distress, she was never less disposed to enter into the causes that had produced it; and, but that the afflicted statesman *was* her father, she would have laughed outright at the anecdote, on which his affliction was principally founded.

She was staggered, however, by the authority of Lord Oldcastle, and began to wonder at these lords of the destinies of nations, who seemed to hold their own destiny by so poor a thread that a child might break it. Her excellent judgment, young as she was, had full room for exercise, and she could not help confessing that ambition, as she saw it, was a very different thing from what the generous but inexperienced flight of her mind had taught her to believe. It was, equally with the luxury and splendour in which she had lately lived, inadequate to all she had hoped for, on taking, as she was told she was to do, possession of the world.

"But where then," said she, when her conference with her father broke up, and she retired to her closet, —"where is happiness really to be found?"

The thought engaged her in a long contemplation of what she called the nothings that had absorbed her attention for so many months, and her little pleasure in these led her to Castle Mowbray, whence she began to wish she had never stirred. But Castle Mowbray was not to her what it had been during the summer; and, with every seeming blessing upon earth, this

young favourite of nature as well as of fortune was any thing but happy.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

DEPARTURE.

What envious streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east!
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tip-toe on the misty mountain's top.
I must be gone and live—or stay and die.

SHAKSPEARE.

COULD De Vere have penetrated his cousin's mind, during the hours consequent to his last interview with her, it might probably have relieved his own from some of the weight which oppressed it in the moment of his leaving London with Mr. Wentworth. He would not, perhaps, have found there the species of feeling which might have determined his own heart what to wish, or how to act: but he would have seen that the person who he thought had begun to listen to the flatteries of the world, was as pure as ever in her nature, and as free as ever from the tainting effect of those flatteries. The contrary opinion, however, had got a little, a very little, hold of him, and as his post-chaise drove through Grosvenor-square before five in the morning, and he looked up at the close-shuttered windows of her chamber, he felt an unaccountable heaviness from the mixed nature of his reflections. She was then, he thought, in slumber, jaded perhaps with the vigil of some nightly ball, where all the incense of the state had been offered her, and her only embarrassment had been to decide which pleasure she should most enjoy, or on what candidate for her favour she should bestow most of her notice. At any rate, he supposed her indifferent to any feelings that might be entertained for her by himself; and although he felt a sort of pang at the thought that it would be long before he saw that house,

or its lovely inhabitant again, (if indeed he might not be taking his last view of it,) yet he could not forget his uncle's moroseness, or the insensibility with which she herself had seemed to part with him.

With these impressions, it was with little alacrity of heart that he lost sight of Mowbray House; and though Wentworth was by his side, he threw himself back in the carriage, and drawing his hat over his eyes, neither gentleman spoke a word to the other for many minutes.

Their meditations certainly were not disturbed by any thing from without; for though all was light throughout the vast city, every thing seemed buried in silence and solitude. The repose reminded one of abandoned Rome when entered by Brennus and his Gauls, so deep and motionless was it, even at an hour when Nature had begun to assume all her gladness with the rising of the sun.

This contrast, which often exists between the cheerful appearance of inanimate objects and the deep rest of man, is, to a contemplative person, always full of interest; nor, perhaps, of all the scenes on which such a person loves to fasten, is there one more pregnant with philosophic food than this,—the exhibition of a great city at the dawn of day. The myriads which it is known to contain, and is soon to pour forth, are then invisible to the eye, and houses, teeming with life, appear abandoned and desolate. At best they are buried in peaceful forgetfulness, from which it seems almost a pity to rouse them. How many thousands of those who were thus lost in happy oblivion, were soon to awake to care, to doubt, to struggle, or to certain affliction! Many, however, to joy; though neither De Vere nor his companion made these last any part of the visions they indulged; yet with other feelings than those which preyed upon each, the softness of the morning, and the journey before them, might have created very different sensations.*

* The modern reader, in the foregoing description of the early dawn in London, may recollect something of the same cast in the novel of Granby; only (as I am most willing to allow) it is better executed in that lively and very agreeable picture of the manners of the day. Nevertheless, as the tone of sentiment is somewhat dif-

The sun had been up above an hour, but was now tempered by clouds which had just shed the blessing of a gentle rain on the earth, enough (and no more) to allay heat, and turn every thing to freshness. But the busy dwellers of Whitehall were still steeped in sleep, save, now and then, where an earlier stirrer than the rest had opened his window aloft, to inhale the air. On advancing, however, towards Parliament-street, symptoms of bustle and watchfulness displayed themselves. At first a desultory straggler was seen, with jaded step and night worn looks, creeping like snail (though with any thing but shining morning face) towards that ominous place of combat, where the fate of nations was often decided, and might be then deciding. Another and another still succeeded, till, at length, whole groupes, by threes and fours at a time, swept the pavement, arm in arm, hurrying faster and faster, in the apprehension of being too late for the question, or anxious with mutual fear at the sight of each other's strength.

These had all been summoned to vote from their respective clubs, where, tired of a ten-hour's debate, they had sought a temporary and feverish refuge. Dim as were their eyes, and furrowed their temples with watching, their countenances still gleamed with what agitated them within; and hope, and doubt, and anxious calculation, and (with many, let us cordially add) real patriotism, excited them all by turns; and this gave a momentary ardour to their spirits, and an accelerating impulse to their steps.

It was a sight which neither Wentworth, nor, indeed, De Vere, could view without emotion. The former saw many of his friends and many of his opponents, as the carriage rolled past them. Amongst these was Clayton, whose quick but solitary pace, and disconcerted air, rather surprised them. He had, in fact, been dispatched to bring up a detachment of hesitating, though general supporters of Lord Oldcastle; had met with a cold reception from a knot of county members; and was, in truth, ruminating on the coarseness and ingratitude too, of country gentlemen, when, with ir-

ferent, and as it introduces a different course of action, I am content to let this description stand.

regular step, and face full of care, he was thus seen hurrying to his patrons with apprehensions of something little short of mutiny. Both the friends observed the phenomenon, and Mr. Wentworth argued from it, that all was not well with the ministerial party. This, with the eventful discussion which was pending, and his possible power of influencing it, but, above all, the proximity of the scene, staggered his resolution. His hand was several times on the glass, to order the postilion to stop, and his heart beat high at the thought of gallant encounter; when the weakness of his chest, and the solemn promise he had given to Wilmot (of which De Vere forcibly reminded him,) turned him from his design, and he too threw himself back in the carriage, that he might not be noticed either by the former companions of his glory, or the rivals of his power.

Having at length escaped by driving over Westminster-bridge, he could not help stretching through the window, to take a view of the House, which reared itself in placid and quiet dignity to the gray morning, unconscious (and it seemed almost strange that it should be so) of the agitating scene that was passing within. For Wentworth was but right in supposing that at this moment the doors were closed, and the speaker engaged in the act of putting the question. The thought so got the better of him, that, had he not been a little ashamed of his eagerness, he would have confessed then (what he did afterwards,) that though absolutely out of hearing of the House, he mistook the hailing of some distant watermen across the river, for the well known sounds of Ay and No! Such, and so great, on particular subjects, is the power of habitual excitement and local association.

The thought of all that was passing, expanded itself upon his fancy in a variety of images. He recollected all that had happened in this the scene of his exertions, from the first moment he had entered upon it: the consequence he had achieved; his increased and increasing reputation; his early accession to power; his abandonment of it afterwards; the acquisition and desertion of friends; but, above all, the ill-usage and unhappy fate of

Beaufort. The remembrance of these was still so bitter to him, that, for a moment he forgot himself: and, attributing the whole conduct of his opponents to self-interest, he pronounced, with little sense of justice, that all were corrupt.

They were, he said, like the senators of Rome in the time of Jugurtha, who would have sold their very country, could they find a purchaser. In this spirit, no wonder that the exclamation of Jugurtha himself, when he turned round and addressed the city on leaving it, came into his mind; and, taking a last look at the House, as he had now nearly crossed the bridge, he burst out with the African chief,

"Urbem venalem et mature perituram, si emptorem invenerit."

De Vere felt all the poignancy of this exclamation, and respecting Wentworth's emotions, would not interrupt him by contesting the evidently too great extent of his opinion. Yet he hoped that that opinion was not genuine, and that cooler moments would bring back his friend to better temper with some at least of his brother politicians; and though he despised many of them equally with Wentworth, and was little enough in good-humour with public men, particularly those nearest to him, he concluded, as he hoped, that this was a mere sudden ebullition, and was unwilling to despair of the republic. He watched, therefore, the return of his companion to better thoughts, from which the sight of so many memorials of his recent life, had, for the time, diverted him.

The silence was mutual for some miles; for De Vere was occupied with other and as keen emotions as those of disappointed ambition; and it took some time for Wentworth to recover the shock which this mere passage through the scene of former contests had given him. By degrees, however, both resumed their tranquillity, though there was still something melancholy in it, during the rest of the day.

END OF VOL. II.

THE PROPERTY OF THE NEW-YORK SOCIETY